

New Kate Winslet film upsets Hindu

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A film about the Hindu goddess Kali, starring Kate Winslet, has caused a stir in India. The film, 'The Holy Smoke', is a potential challenge to the Hindu deity. It is set in a northern city of India, where an ancient temple is said to be the site of a Hindu goddess. The film's depiction of the goddess is seen as a challenge to the Hindu deity. The film's depiction of the goddess is seen as a challenge to the Hindu deity.

'Beauty comes from within'

LONDON (AP) — A blonde, leather-clad, two-legged computer-generated woman strutted down the runway at a fashion show in London. The woman, who was a computer-generated character, was the centerpiece of a fashion show. The woman, who was a computer-generated character, was the centerpiece of a fashion show.

Cardin buys Geneva night

GENEVA (AP) — A former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Philip D. Canine, has bought a night in Geneva. Canine, who was a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has bought a night in Geneva.

Collins records songs in 4 days

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Cousteau and son split each other

Royal Decree postpones opening of Parliament

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Royal Decree was issued Tuesday moving the opening of Parliament's ordinary session from first week of November until Nov. 28. The decree said the postponement was in line with paragraph 1 of Article 78 of the Constitution. Parliament's previous ordinary session ended at the end of March 1998, but it reconvened in two extraordinary sessions this summer. First to endorse the press law under the Majali administration, and later to discuss the Tarawneh government's policy statement. The second extraordinary session ended Sept. 24 after Lower House deputies gave a vote of confidence in the government, with 64 in favour, 12 against and two abstentions. His Majesty King Hussein usually opens each ordinary session with a Speech from the Throne, and both the Senate and the Lower House submit a reply.

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Cabinet forms 'dialogue committee'

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday formed a committee headed by Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh to launch a dialogue with political, partisan, economic and social activists. Minister of Information Nasser Judeh told reporters after a Cabinet session that the formation of such a committee is in implementation of His Majesty King Hussein's letter of designation and the directives of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. Judeh said the recent meetings of the prime minister and other ministers with parliamentary blocs and independents are a clear sign of the government's intention to open channels of communication through dialogue. The new committee groups Ministers Taher Hikmat, Jawdat Sbul, Abdul Salam Abbadi, Talal Hassan, Mohammad Farhan, Bassam Emoush, Nayef Qadi and Nasser Judeh.

Arafat accepts Israel's troop pullback turnaround Netanyahu faces threats of coalition collapse

Agencies

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat said on Tuesday that he had accepted a proposal under which Israel would code additional West Bank land, and that he hoped an agreement could be concluded at next month's White House summit.

"Peace is a Palestinian need, Israeli need, Arab need, international need," President Arafat said after talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Clinton who met on Tuesday with Arafat was described as "determined" to achieve an agreement at next month's Mideast summit in the United States.

At the three-way meeting Monday, Clinton asked Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to return to Washington in mid-October to finalise a West Bank accord.

Netanyahu said he favours the latest proposal, which calls for Israel to yield an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank. An unsettled nature preserve would be established on a portion of the land under joint Israeli-Palestinian security oversight.

"We have accepted it," Arafat told reporters Tuesday.

After an hour-long meeting, Clinton saw Arafat to the White House driveway and shook hands with him several times for the benefit of photographers.

However, Netanyahu returned home on Tuesday to a threat that hard-liners will topple him if he closes a peace deal

with Arafat. Israeli headlines likened Clinton's planned follow-up summit in October to the historic 1978 Camp David talks between Israel and Egypt but doubted the sides in the current conflict could muster the same trust to seal an accord.

Despite Clinton's talk of "progress on

maker from Israel's National Religious Party, a partner in Netanyahu's government that champions Jewish settlement of the West Bank.

Porat, head of the Legislative Laws Committee considering a bill to dissolve parliament, predicted on Israeli army radio that he could garner the 61

negotiating. Conventional wisdom is that Netanyahu's government would probably survive a parliamentary vote on a peace deal itself with votes from the opposition Labour Party that launched peace moves with Arafat in 1993.

Netanyahu's coalition partners may be reluctant to risk a new election. But Labour and disaffected Netanyahu backers could conspire to oust him on any other parliamentary issue, Netanyahu signalled this month he could call an early election if his coalition opposed him on a deal.

Israel Radio said on Monday that Netanyahu planned to make political hawk Ariel Sharon his foreign minister whenever a deal was done — an appointment that would be well received by Jewish settlement backers crucial to Netanyahu's coalition.

Sharon, a 70-year-old retired general and now national infrastructure minister, has led the fight in the cabinet against the transfer of any more land to Palestinians under interim peace deals.

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and special U.S. Envoy Dennis Ross could begin forging a package of deals during October talks in the Middle East that would be capped by a summit in the Washington area.

"During the visit of Albright and Ross here it will surely be possible to reach a package of deals in a number of areas," Mordechai told Israel Radio.

Threat of May deadline still looms in the absence of accord

United Nations address Monday to support Palestinian statehood. But he stopped short of threatening to unilaterally declare independence on May 4, 1999, the deadline for the completion of peace accords with Israel. The carefully worded speech was a small victory for Israel, which has vehemently lobbied the world body against accepting Palestinian statehood. But for the Palestinians and the United States, a week of frenzied diplomatic activity ultimately ended without a deal for a long overdue Israeli troop withdrawal and the sides were vague about what progress, if any, was actually made.

the path of peace," Israeli correspondents wrote that the two Middle East leaders could not even agree on the weather when they met in New York before the summit with the U.S. president.

When asked their views during a photo opportunity, Arafat called it "nice" and Netanyahu termed it "terrible."

Correspondents had no doubt about the apparent atmosphere indoors — they described it as cloudy and cool.

"We say no," said Hanan Porat, a law-

votes required in the 120-member Knesset to bring down Netanyahu.

"If the government decides on this withdrawal, which means giving Arafat a Palestinian state on a silver platter, we won't be able to be partners to this government and this means there will be early elections," Porat said.

Two Jewish settler leaders flew to Washington hoping to catch Netanyahu before he went into the White House summit. They arrived too late to meet him but publicly it did not seem to matter — his only promise was to go on

Israeli Arab protests over land seizures spread

UMM AL FAHEM (AFP) — Israeli Arabs clashed with police for a third straight day Tuesday during a general strike by the million-strong minority over land confiscations and police brutality.

The unrest, which began Sunday in this town of 35,000 north of Tel Aviv, spread Tuesday to Nazareth, Israel's biggest Israeli Arab city in the north of the country, and to the West Bank city of Bethlehem, witnesses said.

Youths threw stones at Israeli police vehicles which entered Umm Al Fahem and police responded by firing tear gas.

Seven protesters were arrested. In Nazareth, protesters also threw stones at police, slightly injuring one officer, while several dozen Palestinians stoned Israeli troops at an army checkpoint in Bethlehem, witnesses said.

The disturbances broke out during a general strike called by a liaison committee of Israeli Arab organisations which closed schools, city offices and shops in Arab communities around the country.

Police said many Arab workers, however, appeared to go to work despite the strike call.

Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip also observed a one-hour solidarity strike with the Israeli Arabs on Tuesday.

Israeli political leaders and security officials had sought to

calm the Arabs' fury on Tuesday before the start at sundown of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement and the holiest day on the Jewish calendar.

President Ezer Weizman visited Umm Al Fahem but ran into angry allegations of police brutality from local leaders, Israel Radio said.

Members of the city council were particularly angry that police had raided a school during the worst clashes on Sunday.

The unrest erupted here when police tried to dismantle two protest tents set up on land the army plans to confiscate to make a firing range.

Hundreds of police descended on Umm Al Fahem Sunday to evacuate the handful of sit-in protesters at the site.

The operation infuriated residents who turned out by the hundreds to pelt the police with stones and some gasoline bombs, drawing volleys of tear gas and rubber coated bullets in return.

Police also beat many protesters and stormed a school at one point, providing Israeli television crews with footage which recalled for many the days of the 1987-1993 Palestinian uprising against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

More than 100 Arabs were wounded in Sunday's clashes which were followed by a second day of unrest on Monday during which another dozen



Israeli border police officers with clubs and a teargas grenade launcher arrest Tuesday a youth from the Israeli-Arab town of Umm Al Fahem in northern Israel (AP photo)

Arabs were wounded. Around 50 protesters were arrested during the two days.

Police also withdrew forces deployed around the town to avoid friction.

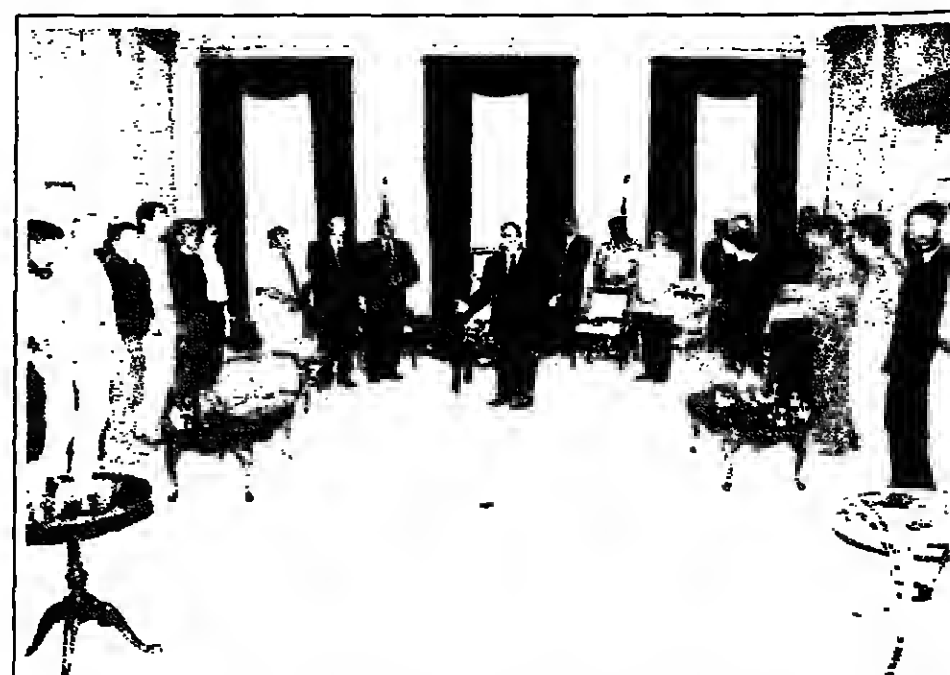
"We withdrew our forces from the entrances to the town and nearby road junctions in exchange for a promise from Umm Al Fahem's mayor, Raid Salah, and Arab members of parliament to do all they could to calm the protests," said Dov

Sheffer, the police commissioner for northern Israel.

Land confiscations are among the most explosive of issues for the Israeli Arabs — Palestinians who refused to flee their homes when the state of Israel was created in 1948 and who have since seen vast tracts of their property taken for use by the military or to develop Jewish communities.

In the Umm Al Fahem region alone, according to official figures, the state and army have confiscated 12,500 hectares since 1948, leaving residents today with only 2,300 hectares of available land around the town.

The latest confiscation concerned only another 25 hectares but coincided with a rise in militancy in Umm Al Fahem, where the Israeli Islamic movement led by Mayor Salah has made strong inroads in recent years.



REGENT RECEIVES CYCLISTS: HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Tuesday receives at the Royal Court a group of French cyclists who participated in a six-day race across southern Jordan. Around 30 amateur cyclists from France, Belgium and Jordan began their race in Karak on Sept. 19 and travelled along the King's Highway, visiting Petra, Wadi Rum, and Aqaba during the event which aimed at boosting tourism in the country (Photo by Boghos)

Two suspects in Kenya embassy bombing indicted

NEW YORK (AP) — Two men brought to the United States to be prosecuted in the deadly bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa were indicted on charges that they conspired to carry out the attacks.

The Aug. 7 bombings killed 259 people, including 12 Americans, and injured more than 5,000 others.

A necessary and predictable legal step prior to trial, the indictment returned Monday carried added significance because it was the first indictment to be made public in what has become a rapidly expanding case worldwide.

Mohammad Sadiq Odeh, 33, and Mohammad Rushed Daoud Al'Owhali, whose age was not available, were charged in the indictment returned in U.S. District Court in Manhattan with conspiring to

bomb the embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

An arraignment date was not immediately set. Both men were brought to the United States from Kenya in late August.

U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White said the indictment "marks the next step in the process of bringing those responsible for this terrorist attack on the international community to justice."

The eight-page indictment did not add much information to what was already known about the men but it did list motives as to why Osama Ben-Laden's terrorist organisation, Al Qaeda, allegedly plotted acts of terrorism against the United States.

The indictment said Al Qaeda opposed the United States in part because of the imprisonment of mem-

bers of Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, including one operated by Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman.

The indictment also said the group opposed the United States because it provides essential support to other "infidel" governments and institutions, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel and the United Nations, and because of U.S. involvement in the 1991 Gulf war and Operation Restore Hope in Somalia in 1992 and 1993.

Abul Rahman was convicted in federal court in Manhattan and sentenced to life in prison without parole for sanctioning plots to blow up the United Nations, FBI headquarters and two tunnels and a bridge linking New Jersey and Manhattan. The FBI infiltrated the group and made arrests before the plot could be executed.

Annan reports no progress on Mideast nuclear free zone

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Tuesday reported no progress towards establishing a nuclear free zone in the Middle East.

Western diplomats said that the lack of progress in persuading Israel to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was particularly disappointing ahead of a major NPT review for which preparatory meetings are to be held here next year.

Israel is the only Middle East country with an undeclared nuclear arsenal not to have signed the NPT. All Arab states have acceded to the treaty.

Annan's progress report to the U.N. General Assembly comes ahead of the annual consideration of two resolutions by the 185-nation assembly on the issue in December.

He did not refer to Israel by name, but noted "with regret that no positive developments have occurred in the consideration of the issue and that the overall political situation in the region has not served to advance the peace process further."

Annan also expressed particular concern about

"the continuing impasse in the work of the Working Group of Arms Control and Regional Security."

The working group, set up under the auspices of the 1991 Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, has never met, according to diplomats.

Annan urged all concerned parties "to review the situation in order to determine possible new approaches and to resume discussions with a view to developing practical concepts that would make it possible to establish as expeditiously as possible a common position."

axes," the Syrian minister said. "Rather they need the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace based on the full withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of June 4, 1967, and from the south of Lebanon and its western Bekka ... and to safeguard the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people." The entire Middle East peace process was on the wane "so long as the Israeli government rejects the land-for-peace principle, trying to impose a peace on the Arabs on the basis of occupation and settlement," Al Sharaa said.

Syria: Israel seeking regional military alliance to undermine Mideast peace

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa accused Israel on Tuesday of trying to establish a military alliance that would undermine the Middle East peace process.

He was apparently alluding, in a speech to the U.N. General Assembly, to growing ties between Israel and Turkey, which have agreements on military training and cooperation between their defence industries.

"It seems clear that Israel does not confine its concepts of security to the Arab territories it occupies," Al Sharaa said.

"Rather it is working to establish a military alliance in the region which will undermine the peace process and put the region on a path prone with dangers, tension and potential explosion," Al Sharaa did not refer by name to Turkey, which has differences with Syria over water rights and accuses Damascus of supporting the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which seeks to establish a state in southeast Turkey.

"What the region and its peoples need is not the establishment of alliances and

axes," the Syrian minister said. "Rather they need the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace based on the full withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of June 4, 1967, and from the south of Lebanon and its western Bekka ... and to safeguard the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people." The entire Middle East peace process was on the wane "so long as the Israeli government rejects the land-for-peace principle, trying to impose a peace on the Arabs on the basis of occupation and settlement," Al Sharaa said.

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One Hamas man killed, two hurt in apparent bomb accident

RAMALLAH (AFP) — An Islamist was killed and two others seriously injured Tuesday when a bomb exploded in their car in the Palestinian-ruled city of Ramallah, Palestinian security sources said.

The bomb was placed in the trunk of the car, possibly in preparation for a suicide attack on Israel to coincide with Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement which begins at sundown, the sources said.

Weapons were also found in the vehicle, a Volkswagen Golf bearing Israeli licence plates which was parked in an industrial zone on the southern

edge of Ramallah, the sources said. A witness said the men's bodies and the car were riddled with nails, often placed in Hamas bombs as shrapnel.

Palestinian security forces quickly sealed off the area and arrested several men who worked with one of the victims at a local construction site, sources said.

The dead man was identified by security sources as Zahran Zahran and the wounded as two brothers, Suleiman and Salim Abu Eid, all from the village of Bidu between Ramallah and Jerusalem.

All three were known by neighbours

in Bidu and by police as Hamas activists and had been hunted by Palestinian security forces for some time.

One witness said two of the three men were sitting in the car and the explosion occurred as the third man approached from another vehicle parked across the street.

Israeli security forces have been on high alert for possible Hamas attacks in retaliation for the slaying by Israeli special forces on Sept. 10 of two senior Hamas militants, Adel and Imad Awadallah.

Hamas militants have vowed to avenge the death of the Awadallahs,

who were both Ramallah residents, by attacking Israel.

Last week a bomb exploded at a bus stop in east Jerusalem, but only one person was in the area at the time and was just slightly hurt.

The Israeli security alert was heightened Tuesday for fear Hamas could attempt a revenge attack during Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar.

Among other measures, the Israeli army barred entry to Israel by Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

'Jordanian application of international protocols could be problematic'

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh

AMMAN — Although Jordan's signings of international protocols have been well-intended, their legal application within the country could prove problematic, a former official said yesterday.

"Entering into agreements should be preceded by in-depth study," said international law expert Awn Khasawneh. "I regret to say, however, that when we [Jordan] decided to enter some agreements, we did not follow this approach."

During a roundtable discussion dedicated to the establishment of the new International Criminal Court, Khasawneh said that as a result, Jordan — unlike many other countries — attached no reservations to signing such protocols and conventions.

"We entered without reservations," said Khasawneh, a former Royal Court chief, "therefore, there are problems that could arise upon imple-

mentation due to the inconsistencies between the national and international laws."

Article 20 of the International Human Rights Declaration, to which Jordan is a signatory, is one example of the discrepancies.

It states that "everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and no one may be compelled to belong to an association."

But being a member in an association is a condition to practising many professions in the country.

The Press Association Law, for example, defines a journalist as "a member of the association registered in the journalists' roster who practises journalism according to the articles in this law." Thus, any journalist who is not a member of the association is barred from practising the profession.

Panelist Waleed Sadi, an international law and human rights expert, said most signa-

tures to the provisions of these international documents. According to Sadi, "there are no penalties as such for signatories that violate the provisions of conventions."

Compared to neighbouring countries, Jordan is the leader in signing international protocols, according to Khasawneh. But one element that marginalises the importance of these conventions is that they do not go through the constitutional channels, and therefore commitment to them remains obscure.

"The Kingdom has a good record in adopting [international] conventions," Khasawneh, who was a member of Jordan's peace negotiating team with Israel, told participants. "But when it comes to implementation, they do not have much bearing on our national laws."

According to the Constitution, agreements have to be endorsed by Parliament, ratified by a Royal Decree and

then issued in the official gazette before they are enforced as part of the legislation of the land.

One of the recommendations of the event, organised by the Institute of Diplomacy in conjunction with a local human rights organisation called Mizan, was that a list of all the international human rights conventions Jordan has signed be submitted to the Cabinet for publication in the gazette and subsequent enforcement.

A total of 121 countries initially agreed on establishing the International Criminal Court, whose jurisdiction will encompass crimes of war, humanity and genocide, according to Sadi.

"The International Criminal Court will fill the vacuum created by the shortcomings of the national court systems," Sadi, former chairman of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, told the Jordan Times on Tuesday.

'Taleban complete sweep in central province'

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Afghanistan's Taleban militia Tuesday captured the last remaining district in the central province of Bamian, completing a military sweep in the area, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported.

Taleban jets meanwhile bombed positions of forces loyal to opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masoud to the north of Kabul around Jalal Siraj, Panjshir and the Bagram airbase, the private information service said.

A 250-man Islamic militia contingent took over the district of Waras in Bamian province peacefully with the cooperation of the local population, the Pakistan-based agency said, quoting Taleban sources.

Only a dozen men belonging to rival Hezb-e-Wahdat faction tried to resist but they were all arrested, the sources told AIP.

Waras fell about a fortnight after the Taleban capture of the main city of Bamian.

No basis for talks with U.S. — Iranian foreign minister

NEW YORK (AP) — Iran's foreign minister said that despite U.S. calls for formal talks with his country, there was no basis for negotiations without a meaningful change in Washington's behaviour toward Tehran.

"While we see the emergence of a new tone in the United States, old unfounded allegations are yet to cease," Khamenei said Monday in a speech to the Asia Society in New York.

"It is evident that prolongation of outdated behaviour ... can simply not provide the necessary basis for an invitation to political dialogue," Khamenei said, reading from a prepared text in English.

He said that while U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had called for a "road map" for an eventual resumption of relations between the former allies, Washington continued to undermine his government.

For example, Khamenei cited the U.S. economic sanctions on Iran, Congress' decision to allocate \$20 million for covert activities in Iran, and approval for radio broadcasts against his government.

"Logically, the United

States' active pursuit of the policies I have already outlined and the absence of visible signs of its intention or ability to change course are hardly compatible with the proposal to develop a road map to change the state of affairs," Khamenei said.

Khamenei's demands for meaningful change mirror those Washington has made of Iran: U.S. officials have acknowledged a softer Iranian tone toward the United States, but have said they are looking for actions, not words.

Shortly after he took office in August last year, Iran's moderate president, Mohammad Khatami, called for people-to-people exchanges with America, saying the strained ties between the two countries did not preclude cultural swaps.

Since then, there have been several cultural, academic and athletic exchanges between the two countries, and growing speculation about whether Tehran was ready for talks to resume relations.

But despite Khatami's conciliatory tone, he has been reluctant to engage in any talk of resuming relations because of strong opposition from reli-

gious hard-liners inside Iran's Islamic government.

Khamenei said, however, that Iran was ready to cooperate with all countries on international campaigns against terrorism, narcotics and weapons of mass destruction.

That could be problematic, Washington identifies Iran as the top sponsor of terrorism, and accuses it of trying to acquire nuclear weapons, charges that Tehran rejects.

Khamenei emphasised that Iran differentiates between terrorism and support for Lebanese and Palestinian groups fighting Israeli occupation.

Iran's 1989 death sentence on Salman Rushdie, the Indian-born British author of the "Satanic Verses," has contributed to Iran's tarnished international image.

Khamenei said European companies were gearing to invest in Iran, while U.S. firms were lagging behind because of Washington's economic sanctions.

"American people have become even more aware, I believe, that current U.S. policies betray their interests," he said.



R.N. Faridah, a three-year-old Arabian horse displays herself in a horse beauty contest held in Amman on Tuesday. Faridah, owned by Prince Abdul Aziz Al Thani of Qatar, won first among horses her age (Photo by Yousef 'Allan')

Jordanian horses take top spots in three classes at festival

By Randa Naffa

AMMAN — Jordanian Arabian horses did not fail to impress fans at the opening day of the 10th Arabian Horse Festival, coming in first place in the top three classes.

Deputising for His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Prince Abdullah, accompanied by Royal family members, Tuesday opened the festival, while mounted and badia police and the Public Security Department musical band performed in the background.

In the first rounds of the beauty show, Jordan took the top prizes in the first three classes and two other titles of the Mare and Sire Produce, while Qatar and the United Arab Emirates shared the other five titles.

Nokia of Jaafar Stud won first place among Class 1 (female foals born 1998) and Deena of Al Nakheel Arabians won the male title.

Jaafar Stud's Najmeh came in first in Class 2 (foals born 1997) and Al Arabiah of the Royal Jordanian Stud won first place in Class 3 (fillies born 1996). Halima and Kamar Al Zaman of the Royal Jordanian Stud took the

Mare Produce and the Sire Produce titles respectively.

Qatar's horses — R.N. Faridah of Abdul Aziz Bin Khalid Al Thani (fillies born 1995), Sahim Al Shaqeb of Al Shaqeb Stud (colts born 1997), and Batar Al Nasser of Nawaf Bin Nasser Al Thani (colts born 1996) — topped first in the 4th, 5th, and 6th classes championship.

Qatar's horses also won the Middle East Championship, with R.N. Faridah securing the Junior Female title and Batar the Junior Male title.

The president of the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation, HRH Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein, presented the trophies. She said she was delighted over the large participation of well-trained and qualified horses.

"There has been a qualitative improvement in the performance and in the quality of the breed in recent years which should mark a more competitive event," Princess Alia told the Jordan Times.

She said the show is part of the Arab culture and heritage and accords the Arabian horse a deserved honour in its homeland.

The Middle East Champi-

onship is not the only event in the four-day festival. The popular flat race will also be featured on Thursday.

The event includes 165 entries from Qatar, the UAE, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and the United States competing with the host country, which fills most of the entries with pure Arabian horses.

The event is being sponsored by the United Arab Emirates Equestrian Federation, which has been sponsoring the show for the past two years.

The horses were judged in five categories for the beauty show: type, head and neck, body and top-line, legs and endurance.

Representatives from seven countries judged the competition.

In addition to Jordan, judges hailed from Germany, Spain, Oman, France, Britain and Egypt.

One notable absentee who retired after last year's show was Jerash, a four-time winner and last year's champion, a big favourite among fans.

It remains to be seen whether Jordan has another horse of the same calibre.

Greece, Turkey to take part in NATO exercises in eastern Med

ATHENS (AFP) — Traditional enemies Greece and Turkey are both taking part in NATO's annual exercises this week in the eastern Mediterranean for the first time in 15 years, the Greek military command said on Tuesday.

It said Greece would contribute three armed units to the two-day manoeuvres code-named Dynamic Mix, on Thursday and Friday. The exercises, which will also cover the Aegean, will involve 17,000 troops from Greece, Turkey, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the United States.

The joint participation of Greece and Turkey was made possible when Greece finally granted permission, after previously refusing, for a "small part" of the exercises involving Turkish troops to take place in the Aegean Sea, said an informed source.

However, Greece has decided that its forces will not take part in the air and sea exercises in the central Aegean, sticking to its decision to snub the allied manoeuvres in the Aegean after Turkey's invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974.

Greece lays claim to an airspace of ten nautical miles in the Aegean while Turkey only recognises six.

Greece did take part in Dynamic Mix in 1997 for the first time since the manoeuvres were initiated in 1985 after the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) agreed not to include the contested areas in the exercises.

But Turkey considered the NATO had made too many concessions to persuade Greece to take part and boycotted the exercises.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess Basma opens JWU branch

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Tuesday officially opened the Khalidieh branch of the Jordan Women's Union in the Mafrqa governorate. Princess Basma also inspected the new premises of the Khalidieh Society for the Physically Handicapped and distributed 22 wheel chairs to physically challenged people.

Mamsar attends graduation ceremony

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Social Development Mohammad Kheir Mamsar on Tuesday attended the graduation ceremony of 105 girls who trained at the Council of Churches' centres in various refugee camps throughout the Kingdom. The

graduates trained in embroidery, house management and sewing at the council's centres in the Irbid, Azmi Mufti, Gaza, Souf and Talibeh camps.

'Aziz says Iraq positive on cooperation'

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz told delegates here Tuesday that Iraq was prepared to give a "positive response" to U.N. demands that Baghdad resume cooperation with arms inspectors, the Bahraini ambassador said. "He said Iraq will react to this in a positive manner," Bahrain's permanent representative to the United Nations, Jasim Bolly, told journalists after he and other non-permanent Security Council members from the Non-Aligned Movement met Aziz.

Algeria's main party urges Zeroual to stay

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's main ruling party on Tuesday urged President Liamine Zeroual to rescind his decision to step down, saying the violence-torn North African country needed his leadership to end six years of civil strife.

The call by Tahar Benhabache, leader of the National Democratic Rally (RND), came as leaders of Algeria's "legal" parties held rare talks to prepare for the early presidential elec-

tion planned in February. Zeroual has invited the 11 parties represented in parliament for a meeting on Wednesday to discuss "modalities and conditions" for the poll after his surprise decision September 11 to cut his term of office short by 21 months following a power struggle with the powerful military.

"We do not salute the president's decision.

He (Zeroual) should complete his term," Benhabache told a news conference in the capital Algiers.

"This decision does not serve democracy and the process of strengthening a multi-party political system. It will have negative consequences on the future of the nation. We ask the president to go back on his decision," he added.

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PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 "The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin"
15:30 Children's Programme — Halfway to Cross the Galaxy and Turn Left
16:00 "The Album Show"
17:00 "Doc. — Ushuaia"
18:15 Wind at My Back (Ep.3)
19:00 "Le Journal"
19:15 Science Magazine — E-M6
19:30 "News headlines"
19:35 "Comedy — Keeping Mum"
20:00 "Doc. — Envoy Special Magazine"
20:30 "Computer Chronicles"
21:10 "Kung Fu"
22:00 "News in English"
22:30 "Chicago Hope (Ep.9)"
23:59 "Drama — Bugs"
01:00 "End of T.V."

PRAYER TIMES

04:07 Fajr
05:24 (Sunrise) Duha
11:26 Dhuhur
14:30 'Asr
17:28 Maghreb
18:45 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622266

Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811

St. Aftan Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751

Amman International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146

The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to drop slightly becoming around average with clouds appearing at low altitudes and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active, and seas calm.

Amman 19/30

Aqaba 23/36

Deserts 18/33

Jordan Valley 24/35

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 32, Aqaba 37

Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 25

Jerash 32

Um Qays 31

Madaba 31

Petra 31

Dead Sea 36

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 4885446

Dr. Arafat Ashbah 5602507

Dr. Ayman Muhtaseb 4875748

Dr. Jamal Jbarah 5347351

Firas pharmacy 5661912

Al Asema pharmacy 4637055

Al Salam pharmacy 4636730

Yacoub pharmacy 4644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660

Nairoukh pharmacy 4623672

Najib pharmacy 5347632

IRBID:

Dr. Issam Salih 246858

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Hibal Al Sayid 3852902

Khalifeh pharmacy 585417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade 4617101

Blood Bank 4775121

Highway Police 5343402

Traffic Police 4896390

Public Security Dept. 4630321

Hotel Complaints 5605800

Price Complaints 5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 4777111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 4773111

Radio Jordan 4774111

Water Authority 5680100

J. Electricity Authority 5815615

Electric Power Co. 4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199

The Islamic Abdul 5661317

Husseini Medical Centre Tel. 5856856

Luznilla 4630195

Khalidieh Maternity 4644281/6

Akileh Maternity 4642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362

Malhas, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071

Shmeisani Hospital 5669131

University Hospital 5253444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667277

Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3

Al-Bashir 4775111/26

Army, Marka 4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 5602340/50

Amal Hospital 5674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990999

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (03)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Greece, Turkey to take part in NATO exercises in eastern Med

ATHENS (AP) — The United States, Greece and Turkey are to take part in NATO exercises in the eastern Mediterranean for the first time in 15 years, the US military command said Tuesday.

The joint participation of the three nations, which includes the US Navy's 6th Fleet, the Greek Navy and the Turkish Navy, is part of a series of exercises aimed at strengthening cooperation between the three countries.

The exercises, which are being held in the Aegean Sea, are part of a larger effort to improve the military capabilities of the three nations and to promote stability in the region.

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Home News

Agreement on Irish airport as connection for RJ flights to U.S.

By a Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Jordan and Ireland have agreed to grant Royal Jordanian the right to carry passengers between Ireland's Shannon airport and Chicago, according to an announcement in Dublin by Irish minister of public enterprises, Mary O'Rourke.
Under the agreement, which was negotiated over several months, RJ planes will have permission to stop over at Shannon airport on flights to Chicago once the national air carrier starts using Airbus planes in December.
The Irish minister made the announcement on Friday at a ceremony attended by RJ Chief Executive Officer Nader Dahabi and the vice president for passenger affairs, RJ sources in Amman said Tuesday.
In addition to the Amman-Shannon-Chicago route, RJ will continue its seven-days-a-week flights between Amman and New York via Amsterdam, according to the sources.
The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted RJ officials as saying that the commercial and planning departments are currently studying possible dates of flights via Shannon to the U.S. before making a public announcement.
They also said RJ is disposing of its three Tristar planes and replacing them with Airbus-310 planes, a process expected to be completed by spring 1999.
RJ officials noted that U.S. immigration officials at Shannon airport can finalise procedures for passengers entering the U.S., thus facilitating travel procedures.
The new station will also offer transport services to Irish passengers travelling to the Middle East or the Arab Gulf States via Amman, the officials added.

Court acquits two of plotting attacks, commutes two 15-year prison terms

By Rama Hussein
AMMAN — Two people convicted of possessing illegal weapons and plotting attacks against Israel in March walked free after being acquitted Tuesday by the State Security Court.
Abdul Rahim Yousef, 25, and Mujahid Abdul Jawad, 29, had been convicted in December of both charges and each sentenced to 10 years in prison.
The court, presided over by Judge Yousef Fauri and including Ahmad Ayash and Hassan Tarawneh, also commuted 15-year sentences against two other defendants, Sa'oud Mohammad, 24, and his 21-year-old brother Issa to 10 years "because they are young and have no criminal record."
In March, the Court of Cassation asked for a retrial of the four men, convicted last December by the State Security Court of possessing illegal weapons and plotting attacks in Israel and the Palestinian territories.
The higher court stated that "the State Court based its ruling only on the defendants' own confessions in front of the state prosecution, whose investigation procedures were improper."
"The state prosecution, which arrested the four suspects on July 16, 1997, began interrogating them almost two weeks after their detention," the higher court said then.
In its Dec. 29 ruling, the State Security Court first sentenced all four men to death, but immediately commuted their sentences "because the defendants had no criminal record, and because they were apprehended before committing any offence."
"The defendants' acts of possessing explosives and plotting attacks against Israel are a threat to the national security of our Kingdom," the court then ruled.
The prosecution had charged that the four men obtained two hand grenades and automatic weapons to infiltrate Israel through Wadi Araba in southern Jordan during the month of Ramadan to launch an assault there.
During the trial, the Mohammad brothers, who testified that they had indeed planned to attack Israel, said they changed their minds and buried their arms under a tree near their home because they all had families to support.
The defendants' attorneys repeatedly contested the investigation procedures and claimed that their clients were forced into confessing after they were subjected to torture and duress by the security forces.
The prosecution had also alleged that the four were affiliated to the outlawed group Bay'at Al Imam (pledge of allegiance to the leader), of which 10 members were convicted by the State Security Court last October on charges of attempted sabotage and lese majeste.
The ten men received sentences ranging from two years to life imprisonment. Three others were acquitted by the same court for lack of evidence.

Over 120 students to hospital after school inoculations

By Lama Sidawi
AMMAN — Health Minister Nael Ajlouni on Tuesday said most students from a number of schools from Amman and Zarqa as well as the Koura area who fell ill after receiving tetanus vaccinations were discharged from hospital, while others were being kept under observation.
The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Ajlouni as saying that more than 120 students were admitted to hospitals in the Amman-Zarqa area suffering from dizziness and nausea one day after receiving the vaccinations under a public-school programme.
Petra reported that the ministry's secretary general, Adnan Abbas, said the vaccines, given to 16,000 students, were donated to the ministry from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and were manufactured by a Hungarian firm under Canadian licence. He said the vaccines were tested by the ministry and found suitable.
Abbas added that the vaccines met the standards of the World Health Organisation and were valid until the end of November 1998.
He ruled out the possibility that the symptoms were caused by improper refrigeration of the vaccines and said the ministry has not yet established the cause of the illness. He added that any person found responsible for this incident would be held accountable.
Earlier Tuesday, Najwa Khoury, a doctor at the Jordan University Hospital, said the 32 students admitted there were mostly 15-year-olds. She added that some were diagnosed with low blood pressure and fever, but said it was not immediately clear if the students' conditions were related to the vaccine.
"It is premature to determine the cause of this reaction," Khoury told the Jordan Times.
"The students are in stable condition, but we are keeping them here for a day for observation only," she added.
Other students were taken to Queen Alia Military, Al Bashir, and Zarqa government hospitals, Ajlouni said.
Khoury confirmed that the vaccine, which is provided by the Health Ministry for free, had not expired.
"We are testing the vaccine to determine the cause of these reactions," she said.
Abbas said all health departments in the country had been instructed to stop the inoculation campaign, adding that the ministry has recalled the vaccines for further tests and expected results to be out in five to seven days.



A young pupil from Amman's Abu Abbas preparatory school is taken to hospital Tuesday after falling ill following a tetanus inoculation at the school (Reuters photo)

Two sentenced to death for 1990 murder

By Rama Hussein
AMMAN — The Criminal Court Tuesday sentenced two people to death for the murder of an Arab national in the Jordan Valley in 1990.
The court found Hassan S. and Ahmad A. guilty of robbing and murdering a Syrian man in South Shouneh area on May 15, 1990.
The murder remained a mystery until their apprehension by the authorities in mid-1996.
Man receives 10 years for 'honour' murder
Also Tuesday, the Criminal Court sentenced a 19-year-old man to 10 years in prison for the premeditated murder of his pregnant sister, rejecting the defendant's plea that he committed the crime to "cleanse his family's honour."
Eid A. was first given the death sentence by the Criminal Court for stabbing to death his 30-year-old sister Nawal on Feb. 2, but his sentence was reduced to a 10-year prison term "because the family of the victim dropped charges."
According to court transcripts, the victim, who had been married for several years, went with her brother to visit her sick father in Jabal Nasser.
Eid started questioning his sister about rumours that she was having extramarital relationships, the sheet stated, adding that "Nawal told him that she was married and that he could not interfere in her life."
"An argument ensued, and Eid drew a knife and stabbed his sister, then went and turned himself in to police claiming it was a crime of honour," the sheet said.
But on Tuesday, the tribunal, presided over by Judge Ahmad Khatib and including Sami Karaki and Ibrahim Ali, rejected the defendant's plea.
The court instead ruled that it was a premeditated murder, "and the defendant cannot benefit from a further reduction in penalty because he had previous knowledge of his sister's alleged immoral behaviour and did not kill her then."
Police surgeons testified in court that the victim, whose body had 30 stab wounds, was in her first trimester of pregnancy.
Both verdicts will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within 30 days.

Communist Party files complaint against former chief

By Francesca Ciriaci
AMMAN — The Jordan Communist Party has filed an official complaint at the Interior Ministry against former long-time chief Yaqoub Zayadine for unauthorised use of the party's name and symbol.
Zayadine, who became the head of a dissident communist faction following a four-month row with the current leadership, could also incur heavy fines if the party wins a lawsuit it filed against him for convening a shadow general congress under the party banner last month.
Party sources said they expected Zayadine to be fined up to JD30,000, but independent lawyers said they could not confirm such estimates.
"We are not against his political activities," said JCP Secretary General Munir Hamameh. "We are against the fact that he is using our party's name."
Hamameh said he met with Interior Minister Nayef Qadi on Sunday and urged him to intervene to protect the party's name.
However, it was unclear yesterday what, if any, action the Interior Ministry could take to prevent Zayadine from using the JCP's name and symbol—the traditional hammer and sickle on a red background.
On the eve of the convocation of the Aug. 28 congress held by Zayadine and his 200-strong following, Qadi made it clear that he would stay out of the quarrel and that his ministry would not take any action to impede the initiative.
The battle between Zayadine and the young JCP leadership started in early April, when the 76-year-old leader published a string of articles alleging that "the CIA had infiltrated the JCP by giving huge amounts of money to some of its leaders."
In later developments, it became clear that the target of Zayadine's fire was women's rights pioneer Emily Naffa, who had allegedly received funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development.
The enraged JCP leadership then set up an investigation committee which dismissed all charges of foreign funding and proceeded to freeze Zayadine's membership for one year.

what's going on

THE FOURTH JORDANIAN CHILDREN'S SONG FESTIVAL

* Seminar on children's pre-school songs at the Royal Cultural Centre (10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.)
* Performance of children's songs at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.

MEDIA FORUM

* Media forum entitled: "Can Your Computers Cope With Y2K, the Year 2000 Problem?" with panellists: Munir Asad from the Ministry of Planning, and Ramzi Bashoun from British Bank at the USIS Auditorium, U.S. Embassy, Amman at 5:00 p.m.

DARAT AL FUNUN'S SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL

* "Summer 98" cultural activities at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, to last until Sept. 30, include:

EXHIBITIONS

* 50 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sabal Hiani at the Main House.
* Works by Iraqi artist Samer Usama and by Jordanian artist Said Haddadin at the Blue House.
* Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.
* Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'sh at the Museum.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by graduates of the Arts Centre (including ceramics, paintings, and sculpture) at the centre, Mahmoud Imani St. (Tel. 5529619), until Oct. 8.
* Exhibition of caricatures of Arab personalities at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Oct. 3.
* "Jordan-Kuwait Industrial Show '98" at the Amman International Auto Exhibit, Airport Road (Tel. 5690753), until Oct. 2.
* Paintings by Mohammad Polise entitled "A Time and Colour" at the City Hall, Ras Al 'Ain (Tel. 4743158), until Sept. 30.
* Display of Bani Hamida and Jordan River Designs products (trugs, cushions, wall-hangings, and quilts) at the Jordan River Designs showroom, until Sept. 30 (Tel. 4613081).
* Paintings by Rula Shukri at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Sept. 30.

WHO representative says chemical proliferation a 'public health problem'

By Ahmad Khatib
AMMAN — The World Health Organisation has helped develop 4,388 standards, guidelines and recommendations as international references for the World Trade Organisation in order to facilitate international trade in nutritious and safe foods for consumers, a WHO official said Tuesday.
Organisation representative in Jordan Omar Suleiman told the "The First National Conference on Consumer Protection," which was launched yesterday by the Jordan Consumers Protection Society, that the proliferation of about 100,000 total chemicals and the need for their safe use "has become a serious public health problem."
"The organisation has been supporting and adopting new technology while at the same time flagging the risks and hazards involved to safeguard consumers," Suleiman told the four-day conference, which was launched with the participation of 17 Arab countries and experts from the U.S., Germany and Sweden.
He said that to ensure safe drinking water for consumers, the organisation has produced a three-volume publication to examine microbiological and chemical aspects of water through evaluating 36 inorganic constituents, 27 industrial chemicals, 36 pesticides, 23 disinfectants and 23 disinfectant by-products.
"Appropriate and reliable information about various consumer products must be developed, shared and utilised," Suleiman told the meeting, which aims to discuss consumer rights, quality specifications, laws, and the public and private sectors' contribution as well as promote public awareness.
Similar guidelines were prepared by the organisation for air quality.
The organisation has also developed 200 standards related to biological and pharmaceutical products to benefit all concerned manufacturers, practising doctors, patients and national health authorities.
"Consumer protection is a partnership between all parts of the community," the WHO representative said.
Suleiman said that in the last two decades, new technology has resulted in hazards and risks which could adversely impact consumers and their health.
Regarding the conference's agenda, Jordan Consumers Protection Society President Mohammad Obeidat earlier this week said the meeting's main aim would be to draw more attention to the importance of consumer protection and rights.
He added that with regard to Jordan, negative and positive effects of the economic reform programme on consumers would be discussed.
The conference will also renew the draft by-laws of the Arab Consumer Federation, which aims at protecting the Arab consumer and guarding against dangers to life and health through interaction between member organisations.
The consumer society was established in 1989 as a voluntary body to raise public awareness on consumer problems by conducting field and scientific studies and by fighting monopolies and manipulation of prices.
The society was the only organisation to file a case against the government over the recent water contamination crisis and the first to alert the public to the government's intent to lift bread subsidies in 1996.

UNRWA chief leaves

AMMAN (J.T.) — The commissioner general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Peter Hansen, Tuesday concluded a six-day visit to Jordan by holding a meeting with representatives of the agency's donor nations and Arab countries hosting Palestinian refugees.
Speaking after the meeting, Hansen said he briefed the delegates about the agency's annual report, which will be submitted to the U.N. General Assembly meeting during the current session.
The report covers the nature of the educational, social and medical services the agency provides to Palestinian refugees in its five fields of operations — Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
Hansen was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that he reviewed the general financial situation of the agency, which faces a \$62 million deficit in its \$312 million 1998 budget.
At the meeting, Hansen urged the donor nations to provide UNRWA with sufficient funds to enable it to pursue and improve its services to the refugees and to raise the living standards of the agency's employees, particularly in Syria and Lebanon.
Hansen, who left yesterday for Gaza, also briefed the delegates on the agency's plans to carry out administrative reforms.
During his stay, Hansen, who earlier had a meeting with the UNRWA advisory council to brief them on the agency's financial situation, also met with representatives of 22,000 employees in the five fields of operations. The workers had previously threatened an open strike if the agency failed to meet their demands, including better working conditions, lowering the early retirement age from 55 to 50, and re-examining the salary scale.

Editor of weekly newspaper to appear before court

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
AMMAN — The chief editor of Al Majd weekly, Fahd Rimawi, will appear Thursday before the court for the second time on charges of inciting violence in an article published in August calling for a "holy war" against Israel.
In his opinion piece, entitled "Call for Jihad" and published on Aug. 3, Rimawi said the public is "disgusted with" and tired of hearing about the "peace culture" and the push for normalisation of affairs with Israel.
"We are disgusted with hearing the same symphony about a comprehensive and just peace and the signed agreements that have given [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu's government a free hand in judaisation, while chaining us down and paralysing us from taking any action," he said.
Rimawi questioned the "culture of peace," asked whether any of what was promised has been achieved, and said the "Jewish enemy" has so far "responded to Arab willingness to embrace peace with extremism instead of moderation by stalling and demonstrating denial instead of recognition."
Rimawi also questioned whether peace could be achieved without struggle, asking "could freedom, sovereignty and free will be achieved in absence of power?"
"We call on all Arabs to reject the myth of peace, stop waiting, hold arms, raise the banner of struggle and regain the public revolutionary initiative," he said, citing as an example the Lebanese Hizbollah party, which fights Israel in south Lebanon.
Rimawi told the Jordan Times that he was first charged with violating Article 9 of the old press and publications law, which stipulated that journalists and other workers in the press refrain from publishing anything that would sanction violence, fanaticism and hatred and urge radicalism and sectarianism.
"I am innocent of that charge, and that is what I told the court," said Rimawi.
He said that he did not mention Jordan or any other country in his article and that he simply called for struggle by "the Arab Nation's masses" against all forms of "Zionist intransigence" and hard-line policies represented by Netanyahu.
"I was pointing at Netanyahu's policies on the judaisation of Jerusalem... I don't think the article was harmful, [since] I have written more than 50 similar articles," Rimawi said.
"I was surprised, as were many of my colleagues, at the charges against me, especially since it was filed under the old press law, before the new one was passed," he added.
Article 7 of the new law calls on journalists to abstain from publishing anything that will provoke violence or sow division among citizens in any form.
Under the 1998 law, if convicted, Rimawi could be punished with a maximum fine of JD1,000.

Blair seeks to rally restive Labour Party

BLACKPOOL, England (AP) — Declaring he would rather be unpopular than wrong, Prime Minister Tony Blair told his Labour Party activists Tuesday that he will stick to an anti-inflationary economic policy — despite taunts he has become conservative and authoritarian.

"So we have set a tough inflation target. We will meet it," Blair declared, delivering his keynote address to the Labour Party's annual conference. "There will be no backing down."

Blair flatly rejected calls by moderate trade union leaders and a reviving left-wing of his party to restore to politicians the authority to set interest rates, which he handed to the Bank of England after Labour's landslide election victory 17 months ago.

The bank, under instruction to target inflation at 2.5 per cent, has resisted calls to lower interest rates, now 7.5 per cent. This has fuelled the strong value of the British pound, making exports expensive and encouraging cheap imports.

Many fear that — aided

by Asia's economic crisis — unemployment, which has fallen steadily since Labour took office, will rise sharply within the next year.

Delegates gave muted applause in the Winter Garden conference centre as Blair, head of the centrist so-called "New Labour" party, said he could not intervene to devalue the pound.

He rejected charges of authoritarianism and adopting the policies of the defeated Conservative Party.

"Don't give me this nonsense that we're just a more moderate or competent Tory government," said Blair, listing recent increases in welfare and health spending, minimum wage rules and increases in overseas aid.

Hailing the election victory of Gerhard Schröder's Social Democrats in Germany, Blair said the centre-left has revived across Western Europe, ending the dominance of conservative parties.

"Five years ago, people said the politics of fairness was finished, that only losers cared about social

justice," Blair said. "Today, of 15 European Union countries, 13 have centre-left governments."

Unveiling an initiative said to have been prompted by a meeting this month with New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, Blair announced a programme of "zero tolerance" policing in 20 high-crime, inner-city areas across the country.

Critics, however, noted that no provision for extra policing seemed to accompany it.

Left-wingers, enjoying a moderate revival during the six-day conference, have accused Blair of ignoring dissent over his "New Labour" centrist policies.

"This control-freakery represents an actual danger to our democracy if it continues," lawmaker Ken Livingstone told a left-wing meeting Monday.

Left-wingers charge Blair with expunging dissent as candidates for next year's European Parliament elections, reducing the six-day conference to a rally by permitting few votes on policy, and having party headquarters control which delegates are called for debates.



Spanish Queen Sofia kisses the hand of Pope John Paul II as King Juan Carlos looks on during a private audience at the Vatican. The king and queen of Spain arrived in Italy for a five-day official state visit (Reuters photo)

Pope welcomes Spanish royals on their first visit since pontification

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope John Paul II welcomed Spain's king and queen to the Vatican Tuesday as they returned for the first time since attending the Pope's installation in 1978.

Both men took rueful stock of the passing of their years. John Paul greeted a greying, plumper King Juan

Carlos I this time around. "We were 20 years younger," the 78-year-old Pontiff said.

"Yes, we were all younger," said Juan Carlos, 60.

Despite his words, John Paul was smiling and seemed hardy, walking without a cane.

Queen Sofia attended in white, exempted from the

restrictions that etiquette dictates for commoners regarding suitable colours for private audiences with the Pope.

Juan Carlos — born in Rome in his family's wartime exile — is on a five-day state visit to Italy.

He greeted well-wishers outside the Vatican before his audience.

Hand-graft first a fake miracle, says specialist

PARIS (AFP) — The world's first graft of a hand from a dead donor was "a fake miracle" symptomatic of a medical profession that "is losing its way," a French specialist in hand surgery said in an interview published Tuesday.

In an opinion column in the daily Figaro, Guy Foucher, president of the International Federation of Hand Surgeons, said last Wednesday's operation on a New Zealander was technically simple and would only have been complex for a surgical team that did not include a surgeon experienced in micro-surgery and surgery of the hand.

"Although the operation was simple," it was "unreasonable" for several reasons, Foucher said, adding that the gap between the amputation and the graft was, at nearly 10 years, "particularly long."

This meant that the patient, Clint Hallam, from Perth, Australia, had not managed to adjust to the amputation in spite of a long period "which signifies major psychological problems."

Foucher said the long gap must have caused the melting away of Hallam's forearm muscles and his brain's memory of the limb. "No trace in the brain, therefore no control is possible and no utilisation either," Foucher wrote.

He also said it was "problematic" that Hallam would recover feeling in his hand and although the operation might be technically successful, use of the limb would probably not be recovered because of "poor quality of feeling and mobility."

Foucher said the result would be similar to installation of an "aesthetic artificial hand."

In addition, the anti-rejection treatment Hallam would have to have for the rest of his life would change him into "a sick man."

Hallam's new hand was grafted on last Wednesday at Edouard Herriot hospital in Lyon, south-eastern France by an international team of surgeons.

In the 13-hour operation, the new hand and lower forearm were grafted in surgery on Hallam's arteries, veins, nerves, tendons, muscles and skin after surgeons pinned together the two bones in the forearm. The hand was provided by an anonymous donor.

The team of surgeons who carried out the operation was headed by Frenchman Jean-Michel Dubernard, head of the hospital's transplant surgery service, and Australian Earl Owen from Sydney.

In Australia, media reports said that Hallam had been paid 50,000 Australian dollars (\$29,500) for exclusive rights to his story.

Wood said the ozone hole had reached its greatest extent and would, as the vortex subsided, begin to break up in about a month.

"It could break up around October or sometimes it has been as late as November," This is additionally dangerous as it is usually summer and the areas are known for their bright, clear air.

Wood said scientists were not in any danger as the sun was still very low on the horizon and it was so cold they were fully dressed outside.

"The only bit of skin showing is part of your face, but you need a lot of sunblock for that."

Wood said there had

always been variations in the size of the ozone hole but this winter there had been a significant polar vortex.

Scientists had believed the ban on ozone-eating chemicals had led to the hole reaching a plateau of size and intensity.

"This year is noticeably different and it goes to show we still do not know all the answers," atmospheric scientist Dr. Stephen Wood told AFP from New Zealand's Scott Base, right under the hole.

Most of the chlorines are believed to come from CFCs used in coolants in refrigerators and air conditioners. CFC production has been banned in developed countries and will end worldwide by the turn of the century.

Wood said there had

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Monica feels no bitterness'

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Monica Lewinsky's lawyer, Plato Cacheris, says the former White House intern "feels no bitterness about her situation" and says she will eventually tell her own story about her relationship with President Clinton. In a rare BBC television interview, Cacheris was asked if it bothers him that Lewinsky lied in her Paula Jones deposition, when she said she never had a sexual relationship with Clinton. Cacheris confided: "No, no lie is excusable, but it can be defensible. There are legal defences to lying — it is a question of the forum in which the lie was given." Cacheris is confident his client will survive the scandal. "She will be able to be her own person. She feels no bitterness about her situation. She is doing well and will be able to speak for herself in the future." Cacheris, a well-known and respected Washington lawyer, and colleague Jacob Stein brokered an immunity deal for Lewinsky, after taking over the legal reins from William Ginsburg. Cacheris demurred on the question of whether Congress should continue to release evidence gathered in Kenneth Starr's investigation: "I haven't reached a conclusion on that. It is not effective for any of my clients if I get emotional." Cacheris, who represented Oliver North's assistant Fawn Hall in the Iran-Contra scandal, chose his words carefully when describing Starr's investigation. He said: "I don't need to get involved in grading his tactics — he has his charter and he is going forward with his work." Pressed to share any personal feelings for Starr, Cacheris only said: "I have respect for the man."

Gates is still America's wealthiest

NEW YORK (UPI) — Microsoft founder Bill Gates is the wealthiest man in America for the fifth year in a row, with a fortune worth a staggering \$58.4 billion. That's according to the latest ranking of the 400 richest Americans compiled by Forbes magazine in its Oct. 12 issue. Gates' net worth is about \$18 billion more than it was a year ago, in spite of the recent drop in the stock market, which cut his holdings by about \$9 billion. Gates is followed by renowned financier Warren Buffett, who the magazine says has \$29.4 billion. Buffett has lost about \$7 billion in the stock market slide. No. 3 on the list is Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, worth about \$22 billion. Microsoft President Steven Ballmer is also in the top 10, at fifth with \$12 billion. No. 4 is the owner of Dell Computer Corp., 33-year-old Michael Dell, who has \$13 billion. The rest of the top 10 is filled by Sam Walton's heirs, who inherited the Wal-Mart empire. Alice, Helen, Jim, John and S. Robson Walton all have net worths of \$11 billion. Overall, the list this year has 189 billionaires, up from 170 last year. The average wealth on the Forbes 400 is \$1.8 billion. Of the 400, 58 are women. Forbes says the largest number, 171, inherited at least some of their wealth. Of the rest, 75 earned their money in finance; 64 in the media and entertainment; 38 in computers and technology; 27 from oil and gas and 27 from real estate.

Taliban complete military sweep in central Afghan province

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Afghanistan's Taliban militia Tuesday captured the last remaining district in the central province of Bamian, completing a military sweep in the area, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported. Taliban jets meanwhile bombed positions of forces loyal to opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood to the north of Kabul around Jabul Siraj, Panjshir and the Bagram airbase, the private information service said. A 250-man Islamic militia contingent took over the district of Waras in Bamian province peacefully with the cooperation of the local population, the Pakistan-based agency said, quoting Taliban sources. Only a dozen men belonging to rival Hezbi-i-Wahdat faction tried to resist but they were all arrested, the sources told AIP. Waras fell about a fortnight after the Taliban capture of the main city of Bamian, home to the minority Hazara community of Shiite Muslims. No independent confirmation of the report was immediately available. The Taliban, who overran the northern opposition bastion of Mazar-i-Sharif in August, now control 90 per cent of Afghanistan.

Voice-operated software to translate Japanese into Chinese

TOKYO (AFP) — A Japanese laboratory said Tuesday it had developed an experimental computer programme to translate spoken Japanese phrases into Chinese. The software is in a primitive stage and only recognises about 1,500 words related to tourist bookings, according to the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International (ATR). "By expanding the vocabulary of recognised words, we wish to make the system capable of translating spoken words in other fields," said an official at the Kyoto-based laboratory. A Japanese phrase may be spoken into the microphone of the system which recognises it by the wave pattern and other details of the voice. The system translates the request into Chinese in a second. For instance, the Japanese word "konnichiwa" (hello) is answered by a synthetic sound saying "ni hao" in Chinese. ATR said it had developed the system by applying its existing technology to translate spoken Japanese into English almost in real time. The laboratory said it was developing the system with the help of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and considering its use on the Internet.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

A holding company in Amman seeks to employ a secretary with the following qualifications:

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Warlords tell Chechen president he should quit

GROZNY, Russia (AFP) — Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov's fragile hold on power suffered a fresh blow Tuesday, when three influential warlords urged him to quit, accusing him of incompetence and breaching the constitution.

Ex-premier Shamil Basayev, warlord Salman Raduyev and Khunkar Pasha Israpilov, head of Chechenya's anti-terrorist unit, told a rally that Maskhadov should be held to account before the country's Islamic Sharia court.

The call was the most overt challenge to the embattled Chechen leader since he escaped a July 23 car bomb attempt on his life with minor bruises.

Maskhadov has struggled to impose order on the clan-riven Caucasus republic since his election to the post elected president in January 1997 following a bitter 21-month war with Russia which left Grozny with de facto independence.

Tuesday's meeting of the Congress of War Veterans

and Members of the Resistance, attended by 5,000 people, demanded Maskhadov resign because of his "inability to govern and violation of the constitution."

"The president is responsible for the violation of at least 10 articles of the constitution which are serious crimes against the Chechen people," said Raduyev, one of the most powerful commanders during the Chechen war responsible for a daring hostage-taking in the neighbouring Russia republic of Dagestan.

"Maskhadov has turned the Chechen people into slaves and governs without any counter-weight. He's a dictator," said Basayev, deputy armed forces chief and wartime hero who was Maskhadov's prime minister until earlier this year.

The meeting also called on Maskhadov to answer the charges against him before the country's top Islamic court, and for the republic's television station to be put under parliament's control.

The three leaders warned

that should the demands not be met they would launch a series of protests across the lawless republic, including civil disobedience.

In August, Maskhadov accused Russia and Saudi Arabia of destabilising his country by supporting Islamic radicals in Chechenya.

In July he extended a state of emergency ordered to tackle rising crime after a bloody clash between government troops and forces loyal to Islamists, prompting the expulsion of a number of leading Islamists.

Chechenya has proven virtually impossible to govern since the war with Russia, which left the tiny mountainous republic largely devastated and awash with arms.

The Grozny authorities have been unable to rein in the various clans vying for influence or tackle an epidemic of kidnappings of foreigners and aid workers plaguing the troubled republic.

Indian troops kill nine in Kashmir

JAMMU, India (R) — At least nine people described as "intruders" were shot dead by Indian border guards along the border with Pakistan in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir late Monday, a security official said Tuesday.

He said the incident occurred near Ramgarh sector, 60 km south of Jammu, the rebellion-torn state's winter capital.

The Border Security Force official at Ramgarh told Reuters by telephone that a large group of infiltrators had crossed over to the Indian side but ran away when asked to surrender under the cover of heavy fire from across the border.

"Some of them managed to escape, and to cross over to the other side," the official said. He said nine bodies were found scattered in a field after sunrise Tuesday.

Earlier Tuesday, defence officials said Indian troops had seized a cache of arms and ammunition, including 222 kg of explosives, in Jammu and Kashmir over the past three days.

They said the seizure was made during army operations in high altitude forests along the line of control in Kupwara district, 105 km north of Srinagar, the state's summer capital.

Officials said they believed the arms were meant for militant groups operating in the state.

Two-thirds of Kashmir is controlled by India and the remaining third is held by Pakistan.

The line of control that divides Kashmir starts from the "Chicken Neck" area of Jammu region and extends to the Siachen Glacier in the Buddhist-dominated region of Ladakh.

Nearly a dozen groups are fighting against New Delhi's rule in Jammu and Kashmir. India's only Muslim-majority state.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training Kashmiri separatist guerrillas. Pakistan says it only provides political and diplomatic support.

Police and hospitals say more than 25,000 people have died in the almost nine-year-old rebellion in the Himalayan region.

Antarctica's ozone crisis worsening, say scientists

AUCKLAND (AFP) — The largest ozone hole yet has formed over Antarctica and it has grown earlier than normal, a New Zealand government body said in a statement Tuesday.

Antarctica New Zealand (ANZ) said preliminary data supplied by the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) showed the hole covered more than 27 million square kilometres and was around five per cent larger than the previous record set in 1996.

Like 1996, this year's hole developed earlier than usual in late August.

But ANZ said this year the ozone hole had remained stable for longer and was now 20 to 25 per cent larger than the 1996 hole had been on this date.

New Zealand's National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research measures the levels of ozone in the upper atmosphere

above Scott Base, Antarctica. Normally it is measured at 300 Dobson Units (DU) but the record low over Scott Base was 129 DU in 1995.

ANZ said the measurement on Sept. 22 was 190 DU, had risen last weekend but was falling again suggesting "this record could well be broken this year."

Most of Antarctica remains under a pool of air below minus 80 degrees Celsius, cold enough to support the formation of polar stratospheric clouds.

These were enhancing the effectiveness of chlorine from man-made chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) to destroy ozone.

The all time lowest measure of ozone was 88 DU in 1994 and ANZ says preliminary NASA measures show the minimum value of ozone over the Antarctic had now dropped below 100 DU.

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No use defying the inevitable

THE LONG-AWAITED second Israeli redeployment from the West Bank finally seems to be within sight following PNA President Yasser Arafat's acceptance of a modified version of the American 13 per cent proposal. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are now tentatively scheduled to meet next month to hammer out the final details preceding the redeployment, including definitions of the so-called "nature reserve" and security measures. But the question still remains as to what comes next if and when the troop withdrawal takes place.

Although Arafat did not explicitly announce his intention to declare a state in May 1999 during his speech at the U.N. General Assembly meeting on Monday, he nevertheless referred to the Palestinians' legitimate right to an independent homeland and called for world support once this state is established. Despite the fact that it is almost certain that his appeal will be heard and that most segments of Israeli society already realise that there will be a Palestinian state, Israeli hard-liners, with Netanyahu leading the pack, continue to manufacture excuses to delay this eventuality or deprive the Palestinians of the resources and area needed for a functional country.

It is now four years after Oslo, an agreement that was to end with the establishment of a Palestinian state. Yet how is Israel preparing to deal with its future neighbour? House demolitions have reached record numbers, Palestinian water is diverted to Israel, land continues to be confiscated, and settlements are being expanded. Instead of laying the basis for coexistence and mutual respect, Netanyahu has been busy deepening divisions and hatred, all the while waving the banner of "security" on the one hand and religious, quasi-mystic nationalism on the other in order to delay even the smallest concession and justify his policies. The mere possibility of a neighbouring Palestinian state is discarded with contempt.

Instead of working on making positive achievements with his "peace partners," Netanyahu gloats over the fact that the original Palestinian redeployment demand from the West Bank was reduced from 90 per cent to 13 per cent. The tack is obvious: reduce demands so much that the Palestinians will be grateful to receive a small town or two for their "state." Fortunately for Netanyahu, while the old Israeli inspiration of South Africa no longer exists, he can count on the U.S. to support an odious example of history.

So what happens after the next redeployment? Can Netanyahu and Israel at large lay aside the rhetoric and make an effort for peace? If Arafat's declaration is made next May, the likely possibility of large-scale conflict and annexation would probably follow. Neither option, according to the standard Israeli line, is particularly welcome: an armed conflict with the Palestinians would harm the Israelis' "peace-loving" mindset, while annexation would add even more Arabs into Israel's population and thus further dilute the Jewish state. The options are clear: a unilateral declaration of an independent Palestine or bilateral recognition of an independent Palestine. Either way, there will be a state.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AI Ra't's Fahed Faneck discussed the new government's policies, which were presented in the prime minister's first press conference, saying the local media exaggerated their support for these policies, leaving some issues unquestioned. In his trip to the U.S., the prime minister will discuss facilitating trade with Palestine, meaning, the writer said, trying to make the U.S. push Israel to lift the economic sanctions on Jordan. So, does this mean that the Kingdom has reached a deal with Israel on this issue? And do Jordanians still trust U.S. willingness to push Israel for Arab benefit, asked Faneck. Another issue is the military service, which practically means "forced labour" and a false solution for the unemployment problem, which may cause administrative confusion in the public and the private sectors, he said. There are other issues. Is the government going to create a dialogue with the professional associations on support for the Palestinian Authority, relations with Turkey and a strategic partner of the Jordan Telecommunication Company? Also, it is worth mentioning that while other countries in the region ignore the sanctions on Iraq, Jordan insists on adhering to them, Faneck stated.

AI Ra't's Mahmoud Rimawi said there were two reasons for Iran's contradictory reactions to the Salman Rushdie issue: differences between conservatives and reformists, and the launching of a double policy that separates ideological remnants from the revolution from the state. While these revolutionaries maintain that the fatwa on Rushdie has to go on, the government has declared it will not implement the fatwa, the writer said. Meanwhile, with all this fuss, mutual threats between Iran and Israel on the development of long-range weapons are being exchanged, Rimawi added. Israel wants to control the region including Iran, he said. But Iran is becoming good at developing relations with the Western world while at the same time developing its weapons, the writer claimed, and that is why Iran is successful in maintaining a strong presence in the region.

Washington Watch

Congress make up still a mystery

Dr. James Zogby

AS THEY are occurring under the cloud of the continuing preoccupation with the president's scandal, this November's congressional elections will be both unique and unpredictable.

At present, Republicans hold a 228-207 edge (including one Independent who votes with the Democrats) in the 435-member body.

In a normal election year about one-fourth of the contested seats, over 100, are typically close races. This year, however, less than 60 races are considered competitive. Thus, even under the best of circumstances, it will be difficult for any major shift to take place.

Nevertheless, just two months ago Democrats were optimistic of their chances of regaining control of the Congress. They had recruited a good field of challengers and erased much of their 1996 debt leaving the party with enough money to run their November campaign. Despite the fact that each of the 435 congressional seats are contested individually in separate districts across the United States, Democrats had worked to develop a number of national themes (protection of social security, health care reform, campaign finance reform, anti-tobacco legislation) they felt would give their candidates a competitive edge against the Republicans.

Republicans behaved as the Democrats hoped they would and either defeated or refused to consider all of these measures, providing Democrats with their issue base for the campaign. Further boosting the Democratic hopes that they could win the seats they needed to regain control of the Congress were national polls that showed that voters were favouring them over Republicans. Armed with these advantages Democrats set out confidently for November.

But with the elections now only one month away, Democrats are facing the difficulty of getting their issues heard because both national and local media are focusing such exhaustive attention on the Lewinsky affair. Republicans are aware of this situation and are, therefore, determined to prolong the crisis at least until after November.

The battle lines for November are thus drawn. Republicans are seeking to nationalise the president's prob-

lems and focus the election on issues like "character" and "morality," while Democrats are still struggling to be heard. This has caused some Democrats to express public anger not only at the Republicans, but also at the president himself—whom they have accused of hurting the party's chances in November.

Most analysts predict that the 1998 elections will feature the lowest voter turnout in decades. This is also a factor in both parties' political strategies. Since 1974, the non-presidential year voter turnout has been less than 40 per cent. This year the numbers may be as low as 33 per cent. There are two reasons for this. On the one hand voters are somewhat complacent. The economy is good, crime is low and the national mood is at a three decade high. Complacent voters don't vote.

At the same time, other voters are so disillusioned and disgusted by the political mess in Washington that they have "tuned out" of politics.

As a result, both parties have directed their attention at activating their hard-core support groups hoping to entice them to the polls in November. Republicans are not anticipating winning Democratic voters to their side, nor do Democrats hope to convert Republican voters.

Republicans are, therefore, directing their message to the Christian fundamentalists, the ideological right wing and the business community.

Democrats, on the other hand, are focused on African-Americans, labour unions, women's organisations and senior citizens.

This again explains why the political climate has become so partisan and why Republicans are so determined to drag the president's scandal out as long as they possibly can. Their intent is not only to drown out the Democratic message, but also to outrage and activate their conservative Republican base. Some Republican candidates are also using the president's scandal as part of their campaign arsenal. Some are using ads attacking the president's character and linking their Democratic opponents to the president. Some Democrats, especially those in close races have felt the pinch of this line of attacks. With the media bounding them to state their positions on the president's scandal they

had distanced themselves from Clinton and indicated that they would not want him to come to their districts to campaign for them.

Since they are unable to break through the media blackout on issues, Democrats have resorted to old-fashioned direct voter contact to reach their key constituencies. Democrats are urging them to turn out and vote for the issues that effect them in order to regain control of the Congress.

In the past week there are signs that there may be some danger to Republicans in pursuing their anti-Clinton strategy. Democrats, who initially felt shame and anger at the president's behaviour, are now increasingly fed up with the Republicans for continuing to prolong this crisis. And Republicans, in some areas, have become defensive about their party's tactics. The embarrassing and sordid details of the Starr report, the released video tapes and other evidence against the president are now causing a bit of a public backlash.

As a result, public opinion polls are once again showing that the president's approval ratings are going up and congressional approval ratings are going down. And most importantly, for the first time in over a month, the public's approval of Democrats is once again higher than the Republican's rating.

Despite this shift, and despite the fact that there is only one month until the elections, it is still too early to predict any outcome for these most unusual elections. As I have noted, at this point the results of almost 370 of the 435 races are virtually decided with the incumbent Democrats and Republicans certain of victory. The real election will be for a hotly contested handful of seats.

Between now and November anything can happen. Republicans can over-play their hand, the president and Democrats can be hurt by new disclosures, local or national media can decide to focus on issues and create a debate on the direction of the country, or any number of things can happen on the local level to influence the outcome of a number of individual races.

The final direction of this election will not be clear until the weekend before November 3rd and the outcome will remain unpredictable until election day.

Telling it as it is

QATAR'S FELLOW-Arabs used not to take the tiny Gulf state — population, 600,000 — very seriously. Not enough of them to fill a luxury hotel, they sniffed. Now, with Al Jazeera (the peninsula), a Qatari-based satellite channel, airing the Arab World's dirty laundry, the joke has been turned on the mockers.

The television station interviews dissidents and exiles from all over the Middle East, screens lively debates between government and opposition, and tries to report the news impartially. None of this may be shocking stuff by international standards, but it is revolutionary for the region. Millions of ordinary Arabs are turning to the channel for their news — while their infuriated rulers turn to the Qatari government for an explanation.

On the Middle East's state-controlled channels, the news is turgid. Dour anchormen mumble monotonously about the exhibit of watercolours on military themes opened by the defence minister. Controversial topics, whether domestic or international, are given one-sided treatment or else ignored. And although most Arab villages now boast a satellite dish or two, the fare to be had on satellite channels is not much better. The Saudi owners of MBC, Al Jazeera's main rival, steer it away from touchy subjects — most people do not speak enough English to follow CNN or the BBC.

No wonder, then, that people all

over the Middle East are tuning in to Al Jazeera. Anyone who can afford \$200 or so for a satellite dish can watch it. Although no audience estimates exist, diplomats reckon it is the

'On most channels, the news is turgid with dour anchormen mumbling monotonously about the exhibit of watercolours on military themes'

most popular channel not only in the Gulf but as far away as North Africa. The station's two flagship programmes — "More Than One Opinion," which features panel debates, and "Opposite Directions," in which people question rival politicians — provide many Arabs with

their only chance to bear an opposition spokesman.

No wonder, too, that Arab leaders are getting jittery. Officials at Qatar's foreign ministry say they have received complaints from every Arab country save Lebanon. A heated debate in which an Iraqi official got the better of his Kuwaiti counterpart prompted a furious protest from the Moroccan fussed over a face-off between their representatives and members of the Polisario Front, which is campaigning to free Western Sahara from Moroccan control. The regimes in Algeria, Tunisia and Syria have all gripped about the platform given to their outlawed opposition movements. Even the United States, claim Qataris, has registered displeasure over the sympathetic coverage of Iraq.

The Qatari government seems determined for the most part, to ignore the complaints. The emir, Sheikh Hamad, seems to revel in the attention. Although he founded Al Jazeera by decree, and appoints the board of governors, he leaves the day-to-day running in the hands of the staff, many of whom were recruited from the BBC when it gave up its Arabic television service. The channel is even expected to pay its own way once the government's five-year start-up grant expires in 2001.

They cite the presence aboard the flight of senior American intelligence officers in the Middle East. "There were, it is now known, at least four, and according to one unsubstantiated report, as many as eight, CIA and other U.S. intelligence operatives returning from Beirut, Lebanon, aboard the plane," wrote Jeff Jones in the summer 1990 issue of *Covert Action*. "The Lockerbie bomb crippled U.S. intelligence efforts in the Middle East. Were the intelligence operatives on (Pan Am Flight) 103 the bomb's target?" According to sources, including former CIA operatives, quoted by German and American papers, the Lockerbie bomb was carried by the Syrian national airline from Damascus to Berlin, and there given to PFLP-GC operators who in turn ensured that it went aboard the ill-fated Pan Am flight.

There has never been a clear explanation why the CIA dropped the PFLP-GC as a suspect not long before U.S. investigators claimed they had proof that Libya was behind the attack.

The PFLP-GC, a dissident offshoot of George Habash's PFLP, is known for undertaking unusual methods for cross-border attacks against Israel such as hot-air balloons and motorised hang gliders.

Hafiz Kasseem Dalkamoni, a ranking PFLP-GC official, was convicted in Germany in June 1991 for bombing U.S. troop trains.

According to the sources, concrete clues to the actual perpetrators of the bombing could be provided by an Arab, who was affiliated with the PFLP-GC and arrested in Germany a few months before the Lockerbie bombing.

His arrest came after the German authorities were tipped off that an American airliner was targeted for a mid-air bomb attack in Europe, the sources said. A Japanese-made radio, rigged in the same style and with similar explosives as unveiled in the Lockerbie investigations, was also seized by German police.

"By all accounts, the suspect who was freed and deported after questioning, could offer important clues, but there seems to be a deliberate attempt not to

LETTERS
Youth force

To the editor:

THIS IS a time when the influence of external matters on the country — with the threat of a breakdown in the peace initiative in Palestine — seems to make it difficult for the government to formulate precise intermediate and long-term solutions to many of the problems which beset our beloved land.

But there is a solution which would provide a short-term answer and which is easily applicable, although drastic!

Young people of school-leaving age are quite rightly worried about their future. Some can see a definite path as they plan further education, or indeed have a specific trade or industry in mind. But the vast majority, male and female, have nothing and are heartily fed up with school and study.

Education has perhaps let them down by not covering the sort of things they would have liked to learn, which should have been taught by either parents or teachers. Things like the discipline of "having to work," the responsibilities of citizenship and the art of teaching by setting a good example.

For these people it is necessary that they are domiciled by the government in self-sufficient barracks, all in the nature of an enlistment into a peace force for a period of perhaps two years. The work would be selective and paid at basic labouring rates, raising money for their families while they learn the disciplines inherent in the art and craft of "earning a living."

This force, male and female, will be kept fit through work. It will also contribute something to the country and be paid for by taxes. The force will become an efficient youth group capable of active service in emergencies. Skilled in the case of disasters and available in the defence of the realm, but not in any way armed.

The social revolution which is taking place throughout the world depends on the coming generations, and they need the value gained by the experience of their elders, together with their money!

Paul Saint,
 P.O. Box 1370,
 Aqaba.

Lockerbie plot thickens

By P.V. Vivekanand

LIBYA WILL defend itself in the expected trial of two Libyans in the Lockerbie bombing case by presenting "strong and reasonable" evidence that "another country or government or group" was behind the December 1988 downing of the Pan Am airliner over the Scottish town, according to sources familiar with the affair.

While it is unlikely that Libya will point the finger at any specific country or group as the culprit, "there will be strong evidence of non-Libyan involvement that no self-respecting judge could brush aside," said one source.

"Several Pandora's boxes are expected to be opened during the trial, as and when it takes place," said the source, who, like others agreed to talk about the subject, did not want to be identified.

"Springing up from the boxes will be proof what Libya sees as the deliberate American side-stepping of evidence that showed another country or group rather than Libya could have been behind the bombing," added the source.

According to the sources, the trial — "if conducted in a fair and just manner to the letter and spirit of international justice," as one legal expert put it — would clear Libya of any involvement in the bombing, which killed 259 aboard the plane and 11 on the ground in Lockerbie.

Several reports, quoting unidentified former officials of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), have asserted that the Bush administration knew of Iran's and Syria's alleged links to the Lockerbie bombing — as well as other possibilities — but opted to keep quiet and charge Libya instead.

Immediately after the Dec. 22, 1988 disaster over Scotland, many theories were forwarded as to who could have been behind the bombing. Openly accused in the U.S. media were Iran, Syria, the Palestinians and unidentified anti-U.S. groups as well as Namibian dissidents (since a senior diplomat who

brokered a Namibian peace accord was travelling on board for the signing of the deal in New York).

One theory that gained currency, but was suppressed, was that the suitcase containing the bomb that blew up the Pan Am plane was supposed to hold a consignment of drugs as part of a Lebanon-based smuggling operation run by an undercover CIA operative. The head of the alleged smuggling ring was, according to those who forwarded the theory, a European-based Syrian arms dealer, Montasser Al Kassar.

That theory argued that the Lebanon end of the drug smuggling operation realised that the operation was a sting and packed the suitcase with explosives rather than narcotics.

Since it was a CIA operation, the suitcase went unsupervised throughout its route to the Pan Am plane after a trip from Beirut to Damascus and Europe.

This theory apart, most American and international experts contended immediately after the Lockerbie bombing that the attack was Iran's way of exacting revenge for the mistaken downing of an Iranian civilian airline in the Gulf by an American warship in 1985 at the height of the Iran-Iraq war.

Iran denied the charge, but several respected and well-connected American magazines and papers reported that Washington saw the Syria-based Palestinian group — the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-GC — as the prime suspect.

ABC News reported in early 1990 that Iran paid PFLP-GC up to \$10 million for the bombing.

The alleged Libyan motive for the mid-air blast is given as revenge for the April 1986 American bombing of targets in Tripoli and Benghazi (an adopted daughter of Qadhafi died in the attack) in retaliation for a suspected Libyan role in a firebombing of an East Berlin discotheque frequented by American servicemen.

But intelligence experts have also pointed out that other motives which have nothing to do with Libya could have been behind the bombing.

They cite the presence aboard the flight of senior American intelligence officers in the Middle East.

"There were, it is now known, at least four, and according to one unsubstantiated report, as many as eight, CIA and other U.S. intelligence operatives returning from Beirut, Lebanon, aboard the plane," wrote Jeff Jones in the summer 1990 issue of *Covert Action*.

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"By all accounts, the suspect who was freed and deported after questioning, could offer important clues, but there seems to be a deliberate attempt not to

bring him into the case," said one of the sources.

One of the theories is that Washington used the alleged Syrian-PFLP-GC role in the bombing to blackmail Damascus into joining the anti-Iraq coalition following the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. By extension, the U.S. exoneration of Syria also meant that Iran was also let off the hook, because Tehran could not have been implicated in the case without involving Damascus, the experts argued.

Furthermore, Bush who had promised the Arab World the launch of an Arab-Israeli peace process after the Gulf war in 1991, was also reluctant to blame Syria, lest this upset his Syria-Israel peace plans.

In any event, analysts say, it is now almost impossible that the U.S. would ever officially admit the truth about Lockerbie, because Washington has already gone too far ahead in implicating Libya and any reversal of that move would deal a crippling blow to the credibility of U.S. intelligence organisations.

A former CIA official was quoted as saying by the German Focus magazine: "It is doubtful whether my government can ever reveal from the Libyan version (on Libya) has caused enormous damage."

According to the sources, Libyan intelligence agents, acting upon direct orders from Qadhafi, have been collecting extensive evidence of non-Libyan involvement in the bombing in preparation for an eventual trial of the two Libyan suspects.

"Libyans seem to believe that the evidence they have, if properly presented and examined in a fair and just manner, would unveil a deliberate attempt to implicate Libya in the affair," said one of the sources. "Beyond that, they seem to be convinced, the U.S. could be cornered into defending itself rather than arguing against Libya."

The writer is a former editor at the Jordan Times and is now with Gulf Today.

Dr. James Zoghby
Mystery

Features

A hot dry summer in the West Bank

By Muna Hamzeh-Mahaisen

RECORD HIGH temperatures, the highest in over 35 years, have made this a hellish summer in Palestine, with temperatures reaching 36 degrees in Jerusalem, 42 in Jericho and 34 in Gaza. While many Israelis can escape the worst of the heat at the beach or swimming pools, few Palestinians can do much more than swim in their own sweat. Israel's refusal to supply the Palestinians with enough water to meet daily demands has left tens of thousands of Palestinian homes, particularly in the Hebron, Bethlehem and Jenin areas, without running water for between two weeks and three months.

In the Hebron district, the population of 300,000 has a daily summer demand of 25,000 cubic metres of water but only receives 5,548 cu.m. With a population of 180,000, Bethlehem district should receive 370 cu.m. per hour but only receives 60. While simple everyday tasks like taking a shower, watering plants or doing the laundry are a constant headache for thousands of Palestinians, Israeli settlers in the territories are splashing water around without a second thought.

A paper presented by Jad Ishaq, director of the Applied Research Institute in Bethlehem, at an environmental crisis conference in Switzerland in October 1994 provides some startling figures: "While Israel consumes 1,700m cubic metres per year, Palestine (excluding settlers) consumes only 219m cu.m. Each Israeli (excluding settlers) annually consumes an average 370 cu.m.; each Palestinian, on the other hand, uses only 107."

The settlers are a different story altogether. In addition to receiving a continuous supply of water, each Israeli settler annually uses between 650-1714 cu.m. In a recent report on the water crisis in the Bethlehem area, Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), a London-based Arab satellite TV station, showed settlers enjoying a swim at an indoor pool inside a West Bank settlement, while Palestinian women and children in a nearby village were washing their piles of dishes from small 10 litre containers that the head of the household managed to bring home.

Israel controls most of the territories' water resources and is unlikely to relinquish its control in the foreseeable future. The chief surface water resource in the area is the Jordan River basin. The headwaters of the Jordan, which feed Lake Tiberias, are located in northern Israel, the Golan Heights and south Lebanon, including Syrian and Jordanian waters, West Bank and Israeli springs all feed the Jordan below Lake Tiberias. Surface waters contribute 30 per cent of the total supply in Israel and the territories and are under total Israeli control.

Israel also controls the rest of the water, which comes from underground sources. The West Bank aquifer system annually discharges 600-660m cu.m., but of this the Palestinians receive only 115-123m cu.m.

While the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), signed in Washington in September 1993, recognises Palestinian water rights, it is vague on whether the Palestinians or Israelis will control water resources during the interim period. Annex III of the Declaration states that there will be "cooperation in the field of water, including a Water Development Programme prepared by experts from both sides, which will also specify the mode of cooperation in the management of water resources in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will include proposals for studies and plans of water rights of each party as well as the equitable utilisation of joint water resources for implementation in and beyond the interim period."

The Cairo agreement on Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho, signed on May 4, 1994, makes the issue of water control even less clear. At first glance the agreement looks promising since it gives the Palestinians complete control over water resources in Gaza and Jericho, with the exception of

Israeli military areas and settlements, which will be served by Mekrot, Israel's national water company. Yet the agreement also states that "the Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA) shall pay Mekrot for the cost of water supplied from Israel and for real expenses incurred in supplying water to the Palestinian Authority."

The Multilateral Working Group on Water has yet to make any serious progress on the issue. Israel's refusal to address the issue of water allocation and water rights, coupled with the absence of two vital parties to the regional water dispute, Syria and Lebanon, has left the working group impotent. Apart from focusing on data, enhancing water supply and water management, the working group has not reached any decisions worth mentioning.

Most Palestinians care little about the politics of water. After all, everyone knows that Israel follows a policy of unfair water distribution and that the settlements are drowning in water at their expense. But many Palestinians also know that even the small amount they get from Israel is also not being fairly distributed.

The 60 cubic metres per hour, instead of 370 cu.m.ph, that Bethlehem gets is certainly far from sufficient. Since this is the case, residents wonder why it is that the water supply in certain neighbourhoods in the district is never cut off. An old water pipe which for years has run past the house of the late Elias Freij, long-time mayor of the town, ensures that Freij's house and the surrounding neighbourhood never runs out. "The fact that the house is on the main Jerusalem-Hebron Road means that whenever water is pumped to the south, that neighbourhood gets water as well," says Mohammad Laham, president of the Public Service Committee in Dahaysha refugee camp south of Bethlehem.

Laham believes that internal disputes between the previous and new management of the Water and Sewage Authority is partly to blame for the severe water shortages seen in the district this summer. Following accusations of corruption and mismanagement, the previous director was replaced nearly two years ago, but many of those who worked with him still have their jobs. "Sabotage is clearly taking place," says Laham. "The new management is constantly replacing water switches which are intentionally being broken by individuals who are believed to be loyal to the old management, and I believe that Israel is taking advantage of this by reducing the amount of water pumped into the district."

After Dahaysha camp was supplied with running water on 22-27 July, two unbearably hot weeks passed before the water finally returned on August 10, to the relief of the 10,000 residents. After reaching a few houses at the edge of the camp, the water was cut off again. This on-off situation lasted nearly all day and then the water was cut off again. "When something like this happens, you can be certain that sabotage has something to do with it," says Laham. "Someone simply rerouted the water and it will take the water authority one or two days to find the location where this was done."

Because of the water shortages, many Palestinian families have had to purchase water from mobile tanks, a booming business in the territories this summer. Palestinians whose homes are directly connected to water pipes pumping water to Israeli settlements are selling water to fellow Palestinians at inflated prices. One Bethlehem resident sells six cu.m. of water for \$50.

While the Bethlehem municipality and the Water and Sewage Authority in Bethlehem are aware of the situation, they have taken no action. The demand for water is so high that many families not only pay the high prices but wait for nearly a week before their turn comes up because the waiting list is so long. Others who cannot afford to purchase water send their children door-to-door to fill empty bottles with drinking water.

— Middle East International

Global village
E.T.s probably exist

Andrew Line is director of the Nuffield Radio Astronomy Laboratories at Jodrell Bank.

AT THE Nuffield Radio Astronomy Laboratories at Jodrell Bank this week a major new collaborative research project has begun. Together with colleagues from the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California, astronomers are attempting to detect faint radio signals from intelligent life elsewhere in our Galaxy.

This research, called Project Phoenix, uses the University of Manchester's 76-metre Lovell radio telescope and the 305-metre U.S. radio telescope based at Arecibo, in Puerto Rico. By using two telescopes it is possible to discriminate between signals of an extraterrestrial nature and those that are from within the Solar System.

This will be the most sensitive and comprehensive search for extraterrestrial signals ever carried out.

Whether or not we are alone in the universe is a question that has vexed humankind for many centuries. But we are privileged to live in an era where the technology exists to make a serious attempt at its resolution. A belief in the existence of extraterrestrial life is often as personal as religious conviction and perhaps as much based on faith. But scientifically the possibility cannot be discounted and, perhaps more than any other time in history, the subject can rightly be regarded as a respectable discipline.

Before we even begin such a search we must address the question of whether there is some chance of success. For example, can we estimate the number of civilisations within our own Milky Way galaxy? This is a question that has been asked many times, but scientists now believe they now have a reasonable knowledge of the factors involved in producing such civilisations.

The rate of formation of suitable stars — that is, ones which are hot enough to sustain life and live long enough to allow life to evolve — is a crucial starting-point. Astronomers can easily assess this rate of formation at about one star per year. However, these stars also need to have habitable planets.

Only in the last five years has astronomical science found evidence that at least some stars (other than our own star, the Sun) have planetary systems. Current belief is that perhaps one in 10 stars have planets orbiting them. But we also

require that these planets are warm enough to have liquid water, a basic component of life on Earth and presumably life elsewhere, and are large enough to retain an atmosphere that can both provide protection and sustenance to developing life.

Next we must assess the fraction of these suitable planets that actually develop life. Since life developed on Earth almost as soon as conditions were right, it is reasonable to suppose that life would form on any such suitable planet. But we cannot assume that these lifeforms will evolve

hundreds of millions of very narrow channels, each one only 1 Hz wide. Computers then search each channel simultaneously for patterns in frequency or time that indicate whether a continuous or pulsed signal is present. Any prominent candidate signals are then looked at more closely to determine their origin and nature.

We are looking for a signal that is obviously coming from beyond the Solar System and which cannot be due to any known natural process. Obviously, signals from other distant civilisations are likely to be very faint, so Project Phoenix concentrates on star systems relatively close by: within about 200 light years of Earth.

Those involved in this kind of research have no hidden agenda. Strict protocols for announcing discoveries to both the scientific community and the media are already in place. The detection of a signal from another civilisation would surely have a profound global impact. Studies to assess the public's likely reaction to such a discovery have concluded there would be confusion and excitement but little panic or hysteria.

But the world is unlikely to change radically overnight; rather, a slow realisation and yearning for more information is likely to follow. We will know very little about this extraterrestrial life. We have no way of knowing how such life may differ or be similar to us and we must consider the possibility that the civilisation might not be benign before we attempt communication.

We must bear in mind that any signals we send in reply will take many years, perhaps centuries, to reach their destination. This would be perhaps our greatest revelation.

It is difficult to assess the chances of success for Project Phoenix. Since the experiment is targeting only nearby stars, we would be fortunate indeed to find them this time around. However, if we don't attempt such a search our chances of success are zero. Failure, if it comes, will not necessarily mean we are alone, perhaps only that we have not yet looked hard enough. In that case we should look to the prospects of future generations attempting to answer this same question. But if we succeed, it will represent the greatest discovery we shall ever make.

— The Independent



Will they really look like this? (file photo)

Global village
Vietnam street kids take poignant snapshot

By Mary Binks
Reuters

TRAN DINH PHUOC was desperate to change his life. No more stealing, no more telling lies and no more fighting. But in his line of work it was pretty much against the odds.

At 15, Phuoc was shining shoes for little more than 35 cents a pair on the unforgiving streets of Vietnam's southern Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. Then, out of the blue, he got the chance to learn the rudiments of photography on a borrowed camera.

A foreign aid organisation had decided to give some street children in Vietnam's commercial capital the chance to speak out — not so much in words, but in pictures.

For a few weeks this month, up to 20 street children have been displaying 100 photographs at the city's Youth Cultural House in a graphic depiction of their daily battle to survive.

Each picture has a simple but poignant title.

"My future must be better," reads the caption on a picture of a young boy with his head in his hands.

"Praying to God that I can sell everything this evening," reads another of a small boy pushing a cart laden with coconuts through the teeming city streets at dusk.

Until now, children like Phuoc have been just a statistic of grinding poverty — evidence of the widening gap between rich and poor as Vietnam tries to leave behind a legacy of war that for decades shackled its economic growth.

The country is still among the world's poorest, with annual per capita incomes barely above \$300.

And for the past three years, Phuoc has been one of up to 15,000 children colloquially known in this southern city of five million people as "children of the dust."

Most, forced onto the streets by poverty, live hand-to-mouth shining shoes, selling postcards or begging.

Street children are becoming more common across Southeast Asia as a deepening economic crisis plunges greater numbers into poverty.

Phuoc is now one of the luckier ones. He's not just learning a skill, but getting a basic education and living in a shelter for boys.

But he and the others who contributed to the exhibition of photographs, which will be shown in London and Edinburgh this year, are only too aware of the ones left behind.

"They all pray for the chance to change their lives," wrote Phuoc alongside a photograph of a young boy just starting to learn the art of shoe shining.

"I've used my pictures to draw attention to children younger than me who are still on the streets," said 17-year-old Truong Ngoc Lam.

"Even in our dreams we search for a better life," says By Thy, a veteran shoe shiner at 14. "But who will help us find it?"

The city has about 35 shelters trying to take children off the streets. Most shelters survive on little more than donations and only scratch the surface of a deepening problem.

"An increasing number of children are forced onto the streets because their families simply cannot afford to keep them," said Tran Minh Hai, who at 27 runs the Green Bamboo

Shelter, a haven for homeless boys.

Six years ago he gave up his job as a mechanic and took a big pay cut to work with street children. He earns little more than \$17 a week. But his shelter, which Phuoc calls home, faces closure at year's end unless he can find a donor.

About 100 boys between the ages of eight and 16 pass through Hai's 20-bed shelter every year. He feeds, clothes and tries to educate them.

More importantly, he hopes to send them home.

"At the shelter they have better food, a better place to live and sleep, but it can never replace the

dignity of growing up within your own family," he told Reuters.

Hai has had some success. About half of his boys eventually return to their families.

Thousands of others can only live in hope.

"I want to be a good photographer and a movie star," says



Street-life by Tran Dinh Phuoc

Foam parties lather up controversy

By P. Parameswaran
Agence France Presse

FOAM PARTIES, a new but controversial form of disco dancing, are making waves in Singapore amid plans to franchise the wild craze elsewhere in Asia.

Confined to bars on the tourist island resort of Sentosa, revellers clad in beachwear gyrate to dance music in ankle-high enclosures filled with thick white suds produced by foam machines.

These soapy affairs raised more than eyebrows recently when local newspapers splashed pictures of bikini-clad pub patrons "dirty-dancing" with bare-chested men in shorts and girls riding on male shoulders.

Some described the scenes, more like communal baths, as even hotter than those from the popular TV series Baywatch.

Young people say the lure of the beach foam parties is more exciting than going to an ordinary bar or disco because of the novelty of a sudsy dance floor and the relaxed dress-code.

The parties were suspended for more than a month when the authorities stepped in to probe reports that under-

aged drinkers had been spotted among the revellers.

One of the bars, Sunset Bay Beach Club, where several under-18s were found letting their hair down, was ordered to deposit a bond which could be forfeited if it flouted the rules.

But bar owners have vowed to take additional security measures and continue the parties, which they said had become more popular due to the wide publicity generated.

"Everyday I receive a call asking when is the next party," said Kaz Sajimin, the manager of Pink Flamingo Beach Pub, busy organising a foam party for about 900 people on board a cruise ship in international waters.

"Why on board a ship? Well, something different. You can party till six in the morning. No problem. We might also have Russian girls doing a dance performance," he said.

Pink Flamingo said it would continue holding regular parties at the grounds

outside its pub while Sunset Bay, which pioneered the foam fun in Singapore, said it would proceed with its once-every-three-months affair.

"A friend of mine came back from Europe and said foam parties were very popular in the Ibiza beach resort in southern Spain. So we tried it here in December 1997 and I must tell you, it is very, very popular," said Sunset Bay director Cindy Ann Berlandier.

"I don't see anything wrong with this. People of all ages from 20 to 40 attend these parties and they are just having good clean fun," said Berlandier, who has received requests from resort owners in Thailand and Malaysia to host such gatherings.

Andy Fong, a 36-year-old Singaporean who has ventured into Chinese movie productions, said he had set up a company, "Soapy Bodyshakers International," to licence or franchise the foam disco beach party concept to resort operators overseas. His immedi-

ate target market is Japan.

"In this economic downturn, we need innovative ideas out of the ordinary to get ahead of the competition. The fact is in good times or bad times people need to be entertained," said Fong.

Soapy Bodyshakers will provide a basic licence package costing from \$50,000, including foam machines, dance pools, disco sounds and lighting. For the more discerning, there is the "soft suds cafe" franchise concept.

"Soft suds cafe is a permanent fixture with furnishings, pictures, fittings and staging designed to look like items found in a bathroom," said Fong, who has roped in a team of designers and builders.

A soft suds franchise package starts from \$500,000 per unit, including turnkey design-and-build dance pool, disco sound and lighting, foam machines, furniture and fitting, staging, bar counters and merchandise shops.

Monthly royalties will entitle the franchisee to ongoing support and advice.

"I really hope to bring the popular Baywatch babes for the opening of the soft suds cafe if the venture takes off," Fong said.

'They are just having good clean fun'

Arab Gulf states agree draft free trade accord

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Officials from the six Gulf states reached agreement here Monday on a draft free trade accord, a key stage in the formation of a common market of the oil-rich economies.

The customs directors of the six states "gave their agreement in principle to a law creating a customs union and notified the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which must give its response within two weeks," said Kuwait's director-general of customs, Ibrahim Al Ghanem.

"If the WTO's response does not contain observations which would require a complete revision of the law, the final text will be submitted to the economic and finance committee of the Gulf Cooperation Council," he told the official Kuwaiti news agency KUNA.

The draft would then be submitted to the next GCC summit in Abu Dhabi in December for final approval, he said.

The finance ministers of the six Gulf States — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — have set March 1, 2001 as the target date for the entry into force of the customs union.

The six states have been seeking since 1983 to eliminate the customs duties of between four and 20 per cent which its members levy on fellow member states' goods.

According to GCC officials, disputes arose over around 160 out of 1,286 categories of goods.

The six states hold around 45 per cent of world oil reserves and account for 20 per cent of production.

Tunisia to boost privatisation inflows by end of next year

TUNIS (R) — Tunisian privatisation has brought some \$80 million of foreign investment to the North African country but much more is expected during the next few months, Tunisian officials have said.

Foreign investors have acquired 10 of the 93 enterprises privatised between 1987 and 1997, the Economic Development Ministry, in charge of privatisation, said in a report.

Foreign investment represented some 20 per cent of the total receipts of privatisations worth 397 million dinars (\$350 million), it added.

Additional receipts are expected from the sale of five cement factories, tenders for two of which were awarded to Spanish and a Portuguese firms

last week, and from the Independent Power Production contract being finalised with an U.S. firm.

"For the next stage, it is expected that foreign capital entry through the privatisation programme will be boosted thanks to the development of the concession formula and the boosting of the Tunis bourse with increasing public offerings," the ministry said.

"The legislation introduced in 1997 that allows foreign investors to buy without prior authorisation up to 50 per cent of the capital of firms on sale through the bourse and, with authorisation, the other 50 per cent should attract more investors," it added.

Kenyan president orders crackdown on corruption

NAIROBI (AFP) — Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi has ordered public servants to crack down on corruption or face arrest, as the World Bank made it known that it could cut its aid to Kenya over the issue.

Moi said public servants who fail to crack down on corruption would be arrested.

That goes for police and customs officers and "any public servant who comes to me or any members of my cabinet for advice on what action to take on corrupt people," Moi added.

Yemen woos investors at launch of its first oil, gas conference

SANAA (AFP) — Yemen, a poor neighbour of the Gulf Arabs but in the throes of economic reforms, opened its first oil and gas conference here Monday aiming to attract foreign investment and launch a major LNG project.

Oil Minister Mohammad Al Khadhem Al Wajih, in an opening address before some 350 delegates at the three-day conference, vowed that Yemen would provide an attractive investment climate and streamline its bureaucracy.

As a relative newcomer and a small non-OPEC producer, Yemen is looking for investment upstream in its oil and gas sectors, in refinery projects, a new power plant and the liquefied natural gas (LNG) project, he said.

Wajih said that Yemen's new investment law would provide the contractor with "a reasonable economic profit that is consistent with the reserves expected to be recovered."

"The amended investment law also provides full protection for investors and security for their projects," added Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani.

On the gas project, he said Yemen LNG Co. was still "looking for proper markets for this product, on which enhancement and development of the country's economy shall rely."

A senior official of the French oil giant Total, meanwhile, acknowledged that the LNG project was unlikely to come on stream as projected in 2001.

"We are looking for 25-year contracts with reliable clients. We cannot put a time on the startup," said Pierre-Rene Bauguis, a member of Total's group management committee.

Total is the largest foreign partner with a 36 per cent stake, and the others are the U.S. oil companies Hunt and Exxon, and Yukong and Hyundai of South Korea.

Yemen LNG is to exploit the Marib and Al Jawf reserves, to the east and

northeast of Sanaa. The fields are to be linked to an export terminal on the Gulf of Aden by a 380-kilometre pipeline.

The venture to produce 5.3 million tonnes of LNG a year is estimated to cost between \$2.5 and \$2.7 billion for the upstream work, the liquefaction plant and export facilities.

Industry sources said Yemen, which has an estimated 14 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, would need another \$1.5 billion for a fleet of methane tankers.

"The LNG project is not really moving. They need a sale contract, and plans to sell to India, appear not to be viable," said one source.

Yemen, whose economy is heavily dependent on the oil sector, also seeks investors for a 120,000 barrel a day (b/d) refinery to be built at an estimated cost of \$850 million, and a \$180 million upgrade of its Aden refinery.

In the domestic energy sector, Yemen also plans to build a 100-150 megawatt power plant in Aden, where a container port for transshipments is set to open in mid-March.

Yemen is expected to announce a modest rise in oil production to around 450,000 b/d, from the current output of some 415,000 b/d. The rise is due to come from the Shabwah and Jannah fields, both to the east of the capital.

In 1997, oil exports amounted to \$2 billion, or some 85 per cent of government revenues, Yemen's development drive comes at a time of low oil prices and lack of investor confidence due to Asia's financial crisis.

But the World Bank pledged last month to keep extending soft loans to the cash-strapped country in a bid to help meet shortfalls in Yemen's budget.

Since 1995, when Yemen launched its economic reforms, notably privatisation and cutting state subsidies, the World Bank has poured \$360 million into the country.

Jordan seeks more privileges from EFTA

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan has called on the member states of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) to grant Jordan more privileges than those provided for in the Jordanian-European partnership agreement, according to a Ministry of Industry and Trade official.

Director of the World Trade Organisation Department at the ministry, Tamam Al Ghoul, who attended the first round of talks between Jordan and EFTA member states early this week, said Jordan called on EFTA to include in the draft agreement a provision allowing for multiple certificates of origin to improve the value added of the Jordanian products and enable it to compete in EFTA markets.

In an arrival statement, Ms. Ghoul said

Jordan and EFTA member states have agreed to reformulate the draft free trade agreement between EFTA and Jordan.

She said also that Jordan held bilateral talks with some of the WTO member states to fix the ceilings of customs tariff, adding that these countries have presented lists of products where they thought customs duties should be

reduced. These lists will be studied carefully by the ministry and the Customs Department, taking into consideration the protection of Jordanian products and the importance of some imports for industrial inputs, she said.

EFTA includes Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

These lists will be studied carefully by the ministry and the Customs Department, taking into consideration the protection of Jordanian products and the importance of some imports for industrial inputs, she said.

EFTA includes Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

Strong majority of French in favour of euro

PARIS (AP) — After years of mixed feelings, nearly two-thirds of the French think the euro will be a good thing for the country when the European single currency takes effect at the end of the year, according to a poll.

Sixty-four per cent of the French think the euro will be a good thing for the country when the European single currency takes effect at the end of the year, according to a poll.

While many financial transactions will occur in euros, and euro equivalents will have to be included in billings, euro cash is not to replace the paper and coin currencies in the 11 participating European Union nations until 2002.

Opposition remains strong on the political fringe, with 62 per cent of the National Front supporters against the euro.

Forty-nine per cent of the Communists are opposed.

Among the Socialists, ecologists and conservatives, support runs at 65 per cent. That's a strong shift from 1992, when the Maastricht Treaty referendum paving the way for the euro squeaked by on a 51-49 per cent vote in France.

Euro proponents say the currency will stabilise Europe's financial markets, grease the wheels of intra-EU trade and help lower interest rates, stimulating growth. Opponents argue countries will lose fiscal sovereignty to the German-based European Central Bank in charge of the euro.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	MLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6760	0.5861	1.3885	134.18	1.5016	1666.00	1.8886	5.8174
DE Mark	0.5970	1.0000	0.3491	0.8285	80.12	0.8989	988.95	1.1277	3.3630
GB Sterling	1.7060	2.8641	1.0000	2.3764	226.49	2.5662	2832.26	3.2289	9.6023
CH Franc	0.7202	1.2051	0.4206	1.0000	96.56	1.0813	1191.88	135.88	4.0409
JP Yen	0.0075	1.2487	0.4357	1.0344	1.0000	1.1187	12.34	140.69	4.1857
CA Dollar	0.6660	1.1184	0.3900	0.9248	1.12	1.0000	1102.44	1.2573	3.7399
IT Lira	0.0000	1.0113	0.3627	0.8636	1236.21	0.9057	1.0000	11.36	3.3630
NL Guilder	0.5285	0.8864	0.3096	0.7351	71.00	0.7949	876.52	1.0000	2.9734
FR Franc	0.1780	0.2981	0.1041	0.2471	23.86	0.2672	33.62	33.6200	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7605	0.3770	3.6400	0.3035	3.6727	1504.50	3.4150
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2898	0.5317	5.1340	0.4281	5.1801	2122.00	4.8166
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0809	0.98	401.15	0.9105
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9485	1.0000	9.66	0.8051	9.74	3990.82	9.0586
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	1.0000	0.0834	1.01	413.32	0.9382
Kuwait Dinar	3.2949	2.3361	12.3576	1.2421	11.99	1.0000	12.10	4957.17	0.9382
Emirate Dinar	0.7722	0.5530	1.6313	0.1522	0.9511	0.0826	1.0000	406.54	0.9253
Lebanese 1000	0.86	0.4713	2.4929	0.2506	2.4194	0.2017	2.4411	1.0000	2.2699
Egyptian	0.2928	0.2078	1.0932	0.1104	1.0659	0.0589	1.0755	440.56	1.0000

Energy		
Oils	Last	Review
Brent	0.00	0.00
W. Texas	15.55	15.70
Bonny	0.00	0.00
Dubai	13.68	14.04
UL Gas	142.00	137.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4467	0.15602	0.37048	35.7897
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.45614	0.16932	0.37833	36.5484
KW Dinar	3.2949	5.51876	1.9279	4.57875	442.282
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.44444	1.55207	3.68596	355.999
CY Pound	2.0148	3.3771	1.7791	2.7995	270.494

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	294.5	296
Silver (oz's)	5.36	5.39
Platinum (oz's)	348	348
AL (3 Months)	1351	1353
CU (3 Months)	1657	1661
Zinc (3 Months)	998	1000
Lead (3 Months)	641	643
NI (3 Months)	4135	4145

Libor Fixing					
Cncy	Month	1-3	3-6	6-12	Year
USD	5.3438	6.3125	5.2500	6.0625	
GBP	7.4463	7.3711	7.2188	6.9375	
JPY	0.4414	0.4492	0.4727	0.4727	
DEM	3.6000	3.5625	3.5625	3.5664	
FRF	3.5000	1.6133	1.6863	1.7188	
CHF	1.4375	3.5352	3.5884	3.8977	
ITL	4.9800	4.7890	4.2790		

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	108.92	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1949	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	214.6	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	104	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	24.98	Spot
Tea (c/lbs)	125	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	415	Spot

JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
GB Sterling	1.2091	1.2151	
DE Mark	0.4214	0.4235	
CH Franc	0.5087	0.5112	
FR Franc	0.1257	0.1263	
JP Yen	0.6227	0.6263	
NL Guilder	0.3738	0.3757	
IT Lira	0.4282	0.4283	

*Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

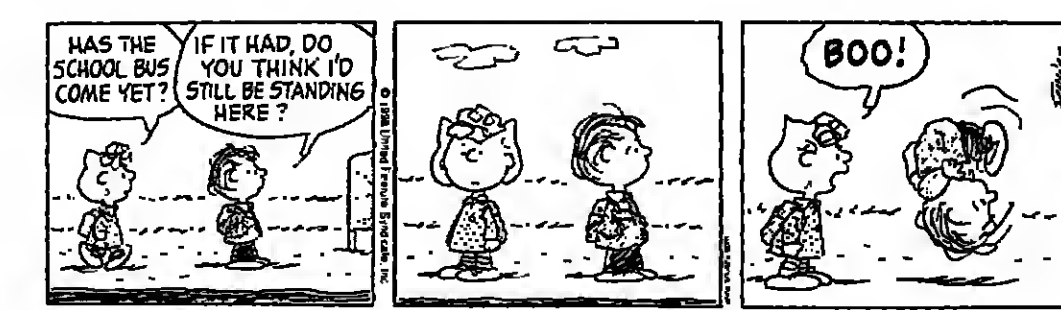
- Most nifty
- Chemobyl or Three Mile Island, e.g.
- Forge ahead
- Keep out
- Vanguard's head
- Wrote
- Furnish conditionally
- Wally Cox character
- Consume
- High crag
- Swamplike
- Marching for inspection
- Before, pref.
- Decorated with garlands
- Of acreage
- Cheer for the metador
- City near Anchorage
- Carries on
- NYC subway line
- Plucking tool
- Pilot
- a
- Wonderful Life
- At the ready
- Schedule for a later date
- Sawyer's companion
- case
- Erte's forte
- Winter sculptures
- Appealing
- Mooring lines
- Began

DOWN

- 30th president, for short
- Room by Pinder
- Octavian's eggs
- Soup dispensers
- Tangle
- Sparse
- Watch over
- Answers
- News bite
- Square measure
- Shear
- Subway of London
- Baltic Sea
- Checkers side
- Collision
- Cramped
- Author of "The Affair"
- 24-7 peekaboo shoes
- 27-in working order
- Cavilar
- Potts and Lennox
- 30 Ustinov autobiography
- Corrected manuscript
- XIVs
- Gabbiold
- Chalborne or Taylor
- Thumbs down on both
- Elan
- Band or diction starter?
- Impede
- Hasty
- Early lab burner
- Put away
- Statutes
- Peak
- Temporary crazes
- Newt
- Foot requirement
- Glory

NEWER INCA CLOT
ELENA LOOM AURA
AIRES ILLBEBACK
THO GIAO ILLUSE
HUBBARD PAVE
BALK BENEDICT
SCAOS MARCS MAE
LONE FENCE APSE
ELK HOAGY SCRAM
DASTARDS TUNE
HIES BENEGAL
SPLATS CALL NINE
PLAYITTSAM ADAGE
AONE REAM MINSK
SPAR YENS PITTS

Peanuts



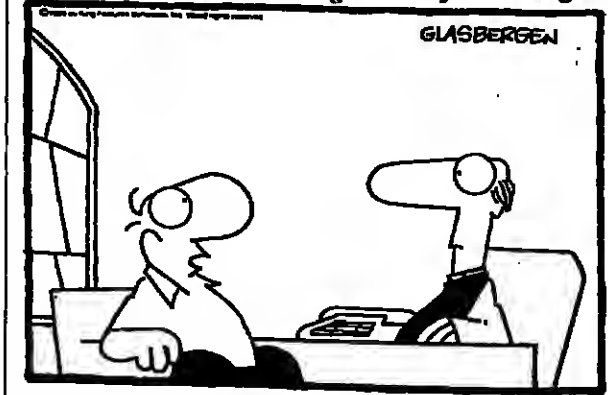
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

OSTIC

SUMOY

NYWIRT

NECTED

Answer: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: SANDY PEACE
Answer: An Iron becomes this to a new tailor — A PRESSING NEEC

ALWAYS EXCITING TO A COLLEGE GOLFER

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: A

(Answers Monday)

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Ammari talks with IMF, World Bank officials to include obtaining additional financing

Jordan will implement a national economic reform programme over the coming five years starting 1999, Planning Minister Nabil Ammari told Al Rai Arabic daily. He stressed the dinar is stable, the foreign currency reserves are good and the balance of payment is also stable. Ammari said the government did not decide yet whether the programme will be carried out completely in coordination with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) but he added the programme "will rely on purely national convictions and will serve the national interest in the first place."

"In case of coordination with the IMF we will not accept any dictates. We will not accept anyone imposing anything specific on us," the minister stressed. He emphasised that all reform programmes implemented by Jordan were national.

Ammari will be travelling to the United States early next month and will be holding talks with the IMF and the World Bank on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the two international institutions. The minister said Jordan will be continuing discussions previously started with the two institutions to obtain the third tranche of loans.

The minister did not specify the amount of the loan but noted it could be between \$100 million and \$120 million. He hoped that an agreement regarding the loan will be reached during the coming negotiations.

Ammari will be meeting also with other officials of Arab funds which extend credits to the Kingdom in addition to the meetings with the officials of international institutions. He said Jordan will emphasise during these meetings on the importance of additional financing to the Social Productivity Programme which aims at improving productivity and social conditions in less fortunate areas. The minister will also emphasise the importance of financing the projects related to the infrastructure that will improve and, consequently, attract investments to the Kingdom.

"The government's economic reform strategy and other plans to limit poverty and unemployment will be tabled at the meetings," Ammari said adding: "There will also be discussions about finding new financing for new projects in light of the prevailing economic conditions." The new projects will focus on the social front and remedying the negative effects of the reforms on the poor sectors of the society (Al Rai).

Expert outlines Jordan's energy cost

THE MINISTRY of Energy and Mineral Resources has estimated the overall demand on energy in the Kingdom at around 35 million barrels of oil annually costing about \$600 after refining. The amount rises to \$800 million if the added value of the electricity sector is taken into consideration.

According to a working paper prepared by Muthar Baisa, the technical advisor at the ministry, Jordan's overall energy accounts for 13 per cent of gross domestic product compared to no more than 4 per cent in the industrialised countries (Al Aswat).

IFC suffers in Asian crisis

WASHINGTON (AFP)

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a World Bank unit assisting the private sector, saw its net income fall by \$186 million in 1997-1998 in the face of the Asian financial crisis.

The IFC, reporting on its fiscal year ending June 30, said income dropped from \$432 million in 1997 to \$246 million because it was forced to commit \$481 million to provision itself against "the extraordinary turn of events in east Asia."

It said provisions were 81 per cent higher than in fiscal 1996-1997, "reflecting appropriate prudence."

IFC net income from portfolio investment was \$94 million.

The corporation, which finances private sector investment, mobilises capital on international financial markets and provides technical assistance to businesses, approved investments in 73 countries and regions, up from 60 in 1997.

In the face of the Asian crisis, according to the report, the IFC renewed operations in the region, investing in four projects in South Korea, where it had not operated for a decade, and returning to Malaysia after an absence of seven years.

"The year posed a particular challenge for the IFC in striking the balance between maintaining its strong reputation as an internationally credible investor with a Triple-A rating and its fundamental role of committing to long-term partnerships with companies in developing countries and helping them through liquidity problems triggered by economic crises," the report said.

In fiscal 1998 the corporation committed \$5.1 billion to 226 projects, an increase from 203 in the previous fiscal period.

Of the \$5.1 billion, \$2.7 billion was from IFC resources while \$2.4 billion was provided by participating banks.

Gulf Air expects '98 profits to drop

DUBAI (AFP) — Gulf Air's president said he expected 1998 profits to drop by about 37 per cent, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) official WAM news agency said Tuesday.

Sheikh Ahmad Ibn Saif Al Nahyan said he expected profits to drop to about \$30 million in 1998 from \$48 million in 1997, WAM said.

He did not say why this year's expectations were lower, but said the results would still be good for the airline, which saw losses of \$136 million in 1996.

"We have overcome the crisis, we have seen an acceptable growth rate... and we expect profits of about \$30 million during this financial year," Sheikh Ahmad said.

He said the company's debts now stand at \$70 million, down from \$1.5 billion a few years ago due to a restructuring programme.

Sheikh Ahmad said 1,250 employees had "negotiated their departure" under the restructuring but that 200 people had since been hired.

Gulf Air is held by the governments of the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.

It is locked in a fierce battle with other regional airlines, such as Qatar Airways, Oman Air and Emirates, the UAE's state carrier.

Jordanian industrial delegation begins visit to Iran

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Jordanian industrial delegation, headed by Khaldoun Abu Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI), Tuesday arrived in Tehran for talks with Mohammad Ali Khamoushi, president of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Mines, on enhancing industrial cooperation.

The delegation will also attend the Tehran International Fair, which will be held in Tehran from Oct. 1, according to a press release issued by the ACI.

The visit aims to strengthen economic relations between both countries.

The balance of trade between Jordan and Iran has been in favour of Jordan for the past several years. Jordanian fertilisers top the list of exports to Iran.

ACI and Iran Chamber of Industry, Commerce and Agriculture have signed a joint statement in 1993, delineating scopes of economic cooperation and means of developing it.

The Jordanian-Iranian Joint Committee will meet in Amman in early December, by which time an Iranian industrial exhibition will be staged here.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARISANI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 29/09/1998											
PART 12 MONTHS HIGH		COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	PERCENTAGE
\$ 155.00	170.00	ARAB BANK	17.7	0.93	41	1260	269515	216.00	216.00	-	-
\$ 1.950	1.600	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	12.8	4.43	1	300	1374	6.00	1.58	-	-02-
\$ 1.300	1.000	BANK OF JORDAN	E	0.00	8	35475	36184	1.01	1.02	0.01	01+
\$ 3.200	870	MID-EAST TRV. BK.	59.1	0.00	3	8200	7437	0.91	0.90	-0.01	-01-
\$ 6.10	5.10	THE HOUSING BK.	18.3	3.46	26	18298	52832	2.89	2.88	-	-
\$ 3.450	1.760	JOR. KUMAIT BANK	8	0.00	5	965	1713	1.77	1.77	-	-
\$ 870	560	JOR. GULF BANK	6	0.00	19	78500	44250	0.58	0.56	-0.02	-02-
\$ 3.910	2.910	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.7	0.00	11	19350	33482	1.74	1.70	-0.04	-04-
\$ 1.260	930	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	9.3	0.00	1	600	570	1.00	0.95	-0.05	-05-
\$ 970	710	REIT-AL-HAL (REITNA)	3.7	0.00	1	800	601	0.74	0.76	0.02	02+
\$ 850	600	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	0	0.00	5	1306	888	0.68	0.68	-	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 283.64 CHNG: -0.10 123 165054 447946											
\$ 2.850	1.760	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	7.3	9.51	1	250	658	2.63	2.63	-	-
\$ 2.100	1.080	HOLY LAND INSUR.	8.2	0.00	1	300	110	2.10	2.10	-	-
\$ 2.350	1.800	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	9.4	0.00	1	2000	3940	1.98	1.97	-0.01	-01-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 126.27 CHNG: -0.06 3 2350 4708											
\$ 2.240	1.430	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.5	5.65	6	1484	2166	1.46	1.46	-	-
\$ 1.350	0.730	NATL. PORTFOLIO	28.3	0.00	16	10500	7474	0.73	0.71	-0.02	-02-
\$ 9.500	5.100	ALBA-1	8.4	7.27	1	100	550	5.47	5.50	0.03	03+
\$ 4.600	1.880	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.5	2.09	3	500	955	1.93	1.91	-0.02	-02-
\$ 1.830	1.060	UNIFIN CO.	5.1	9.57	11	5900	6785	1.14	1.15	0.01	01+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 106.20 CHNG: -0.20 37 18484 17929											
\$ 3.880	1.840	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	11.1	5.85	4	824	1540	1.88	1.88	-	-
\$ 4.110	1.490	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	15.2	0.00	1	300	432	1.49	1.44	-0.05	-05-
\$ 6.500	3.850	ARAB POTASH CO.	19.4	5.06	1	100	395	3.85	3.95	0.10	10+
\$ 11.250	10.050	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	8.46	4	382	4012	10.52	10.51	-0.01	-01-
\$ 1.570	1.000	WOOLEN INDUSTRIES	11.1	7.14	2	100	100	1.00	1.00	-	-
\$ 1.650	1.080	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	67.4	0.00	3	600	688	1.15	1.14	-0.01	-01-
\$ 5.900	2.400	ARAB PHARM. IND.	7.2	2.86	35	10650	28171	2.68	2.62	-0.06	-06-
\$ 5.590	1.070	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	4.7	9.35	3	1600	1712	1.07	1.07	-	-
\$ 2.540	6.500	ARAB CHEN. DISTRIB.	7.6	7.30	1	700	4795	6.90	6.85	-0.05	-05-
\$ 2.980	1.200	ARAB ALUM. IND.	13.1	14.12	9	4400	7775	1.75	1.77	0.02	02+
\$ 560	390	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	13.2	0.00	19	18500	7215	0.39	0.39	-	-
\$ 800	370	NATL. STEEL TRD.	9	0.00	3	600	247	0.43	0.41	-0.02	-02-
\$ 590	300	INTERED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	7	11000	3410	0.32	0.31	-0.01	-01-
\$ 1.760	1.050	UNIV. CHEN. IND.	9.7	8.42	5	500	475	0.95	0.95	-	-
\$ 2.250	700	NATL. CABLE WIRE. HYAC	32.8	0.00	6	2050	1439	0.72	0.70	-0.02	-02-
\$ 1.470	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	13.9	4.76	1	50	63	1.24	1.26	0.02	02+
\$ 1.260	1.050	IND. MODN. IND.	20.5	9.09	5	5000	3300	0.66	0.66	-	-
\$ 920	480	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9	0.00	5	4850	2425	0.51	0.50	-0.01	-01-
\$ 1.580	1.200	NATL. CHLORINE	8.7	8.06	1	150	186	1.24	1.24	-	-
\$ 1.060	600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	8.9	15.87	5	1500	945	0.64	0.63	-0.01	-01-
\$ 1.150	650	RETL. TOBACCO	7.2	5.66	8	5000	5170	1.04	1.03	-0.01	-01-
\$ 1.380	910	INTL. TOBACCO	7.2	5.66	8	5000	5170	1.04	1.03	-0.01	-01-
\$ 1.890	660	JORDAN STEEL	9.5	8.24	2	600	510	0.86	0.85	-0.01	-01-
\$ 580	730	NAT. ALUMINUM	33.7	0.00	18	9260	6299	0.69	0.68	-0.01	-01-
\$ 670	530	MID-EAST COMPLEX	9.8	0.00	2	800	432	0.55	0.54	-0.01	-01-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 78.14 CHNG: +0.54 157 82336 85241											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 171.27 CHNG: +0.05 320 268224 558823											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 29/09/1998											
PART 12 MONTHS HIGH	PART 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	PERCENTAGE
\$ 1.050	860	EXPORT & FIN. BNC. 754	16.1	0.00	3	20250	12555	0.87	0.87	-	-
\$ 600	500	UNION INV.	0	0.00	2	137	72	0.53	0.53	-	-
\$ 420	240	ARAB PIN. INVEST.	0	0.00	1	3400	850	0.25	0.25	-	-
\$ 260	090	JOR. INDS. MACHIN. JENCO	0	0.00	3	3000	700	0.24	0.24	-	-
\$ 500	270	ARAB FOOD & WED.	0	0.00	4	1500	465	0.31	0.31	-	-
\$ 230	030	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	26.5	0.00	2	3000	690	0.24	0.23	-0.01	-01-
\$ 580	260	NATL. MULT. ENG. WAMICO	9	0.00	21	38117	10291	0.27	0.27	-	-
\$ 1.230	660	READY MIX CONCRETE	7.2	0.00	1	1500	1005	0.66	0.67	0.01	01+
\$ 900	560	HIDEST PHARM. 901	9	0.00	4	3890	1841	0.47	0.47	-	-
\$ 2.160	1.360	UNION TOBACCO 87.5	13.4	5.92	3	459	911	2.12	2.11	-0.01	-01-
\$ 350	190	INDS. ENG.	0	0.00	5	2500	325	0.21	0.21	-	-
\$ 950	540	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	6	2998	1708	0.57	0.57	-	-
\$ 650	320	NATL. POULTRY	9	0.00	4	5450	2780	0.51	0.51	-	-
\$ 950	320	OPTICAL BEARING CO.	0	0.00	1	250	85	0.34	0.34	-	-
\$ 1.310	760	NUTRIDA	0	0.00	3	2550	2066	0.82	0.81	-0.01	-01-
\$ 1.000	690	AL-ZEBAI PRINTING CO	10.8	10.67	1	500	355	0.71	0.71	-	-
GRAND TOTAL 64 91502 36898											
+ : New 12 months low \$: Stock dividend during the past 12 months N : Listed during the past 12 months P : P/E ratio is 100 or more g : Negative P/E E : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year											

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You'll be meeting new people, some of them very interesting, since Uranus in Aquarius indicates surprises. Actually, Uranus is retrograde in Aquarius, so you might someone you've known before. Venus is going into Libra, meaning love is especially likely to happen. This could get really interesting.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) The sun in Libra, and Venus goes there today. The bad news is that Venus is leaving Virgo, where it was bringing you luck in love. The good news is that, in Libra, it will bring you luck in your work. Well, by now your romantic life should be thriving. You can afford to go ahead and get more involved with your work.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Conditions are emphasizing the areas of love, romance, children and games. You'll have plenty of all that for the next several weeks. Even better, you're looking marvellous. You're intelligent, witty and gorgeous, and you're attracting a lot of attention. When you've got it, flaunt it! Today, you've definitely got what it takes.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You may have been a little worried about money lately. There are just so many things you want to do with it. Something about your place is getting uncomfortable, and you want to change it. You'll get what you want. It's just a question of how long it's going to take. So, relax.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) The sun is in Libra and Venus is going into Libra today. Venus represents love, and Libra represents learning. So, guess what? You love learning, or at least will for the next several weeks. Tackle a difficult subject during this phase and it'll almost seem like fun.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) It's time to get back to work. There's difficult assignment coming up, but you'll be able to master it. And it could pay very well. If you don't already have something like that on your plate, look around, perhaps even to the want ads. There's somebody who needs something done and it requires skills you have.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This looks like a fun couple of days. Venus, your ruling planet, is going into your sign this evening, so you'll be even more loving, compassionate the lesson you've been studying is just about learned, so congratulations!

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You've got your agenda in mind, and for the next several weeks others will be interested in hearing your pitch. The problem right now is at home. While opportunities are opening up, you're experiencing conflicting demands on your time. Make domestic issues a top priority. The other conditions will be in effect for several weeks.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Finally, the last puzzle piece is discovered. Everything's aligned for your success, but a little work is required on your part. You will have to let people know what you want, so they can provide whatever you're lacking. They'd be delighted to do so. The same thing goes for your

Jazireh's Sabbah named coach of Arab All-Star team

By Aileen Bannayan

AMMAN — The Lebanese capital will host an extraordinary basketball match this weekend when a team of Arab All-Stars face a group of NBA players in celebration of opening new facilities at Beirut's Al Riyadi Club.

Jordan will be part of the event as Al Jazireh's head of basketball operations Fadi Sabbah has been named as coach of the All-Stars while Jazireh's centre Ma'an Odeh is the only Jordanian on the lineup which includes a host of top names from around the Arab World.

Players include Lebanon's Walid Demiaty, Elie Mshantaf and Elie Nasr; Syria's Anwar Abdul Hay; Egypt's Ismail Ahmad and Haidham Saeed in addition to players from Tunisia and many others.

The star-studded event, which runs from Oct. 2-5, includes the All-Star match, a slam dunk competition, a 3-point shoot-out, in addition to an NBA-Lebanese national team match.

Both Sabbah and Odeh expressed their delight at being part of such an unusual event.

"We may not be able to beat them but we'll give it our best. It will be interesting and I'm happy to be lead-

ing the team," Sabbah told the Jordan Times.

His star centre whom he has coached throughout his basketball career also echoed the same sentiments.

"It is an honour for me to be playing in this game. I will not only be representing myself and my club but my country," Odeh said.

The 21 year-old 2.08 metre centre was instrumental in leading Jordan's Under-18 team to the World Youth Championship in 1995 after he scored Jordan's winning basket against the Philippines in the Asian Junior Championship.

"That was the championship that sort of put my name on the map of Jordanian basketball," he explained.

Ever since, he has been a member of the national team in the Pan-Arab Games last summer and in the Men's Asian Championship in Saudi Arabia where Jordan finished seventh.

Odeh said choosing him and his coach to be part of the event represented the Kingdom's advanced standing in Arab basketball.

Sabbah has been recently named head of Jazireh's basketball operations. He was previously men's team head coach and guided the team to

their first ever first division championship in 1997. He was also instrumental in regrouping different age-groups at the club.

Jazireh's women's team also took the championship away from usual rivals Ahli and Orthodoxy before conceding it again last year.

Sabbah is also credited with being part of the team that revived the women's national team after a 12-year absence to become the first Arab country to take part in the Asian Championship in 1995. He was also coach of the women's junior team who took 8th place in the Asian Championship in Bangkok in 1996.

Al Jazireh, whose basketball teams are sponsored by Aramex, are the leading club training different age groups and recently hosted the Lebanese Under-12 boys national team for a tournament.

Sabbah said this was the base the club relied on as they now have over 100 U-12 players training.

Lions ravage Buccaneers

PONTIAC (AFP) — Barry Sanders rushed for 131 yards and Terry Fair ran a kickoff 105 yards for a touchdown to spark Detroit past Tampa Bay 27-6 here Monday in a National Football League game.

Detroit's Bryant Westbrook returned an interception 34 yards for a touchdown as well, leaving both clubs 1-3 on the season.

Lions rookie Charlie Batch completed 14-of-23 passes for just 115 yards but ran for a touchdown as Detroit spoiled the first Monday night game by the Buccaneers in 15 years.

Fair's runback was one yard short of the longest in NFL history but it was Westbrook's pickoff touchdown that broke open a 6-3 game.



Southampton's Mark Hughes, right, is challenged by West Ham's Israeli midfielder Eyal Berkovic, during their English Premier League match at Upton Park in east London (AP Photo)

Wright again for West Ham

LONDON (AFP) — Ian Wright sent West Ham soaring up to fourth place in the English Premiership Monday night when he scored his fourth goal of season to sink visiting Southampton.

The 34-year-old former Arsenal and England striker produced a magnificent diving header on the hour against the league's bottom side.

Southampton, still without a win this season, have made their worst-ever start to a campaign after losing six of their opening seven games.

Despite the defeat, Southampton manager Dave Jones claimed that he was convinced his team "will turn the corner."

West Ham boss Harry Redknapp was delighted with

the points but far from impressed by the way his team played.

"It was a poor performance," he shrugged. "We've been playing very well recently but tonight we were not at our best. It was a scrappy performance but at least it was a win."

Kiev gunning for win against French

KIEV (R) — Ukraine's Dynamo Kiev, marked down as group favourites by Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger despite losing their opening game, are gunning for a win against RC Lens in their Champions' League Group E match on Wednesday.

The French, by contrast, have made a disappointing start to their domestic season and, despite holding Arsenal 1-1 two weeks ago, may be happy enough to take a point from the intimidating \$2,000-seat Olympic Stadium in Kiev.

Dynamo, quarter-finalists last season after routing Barcelona and PSV Eindhoven to win the "group of death", are desperate to get back to winning ways after letting Greece's Panathinaikos come back to beat them 2-1 in Athens.

Despite that defeat Wenger, whose English champions host Dynamo in three weeks time, still considers them the best in the

Inter without Ronaldo for Sturm Graz clash

ROME (R) — Inter Milan will be without both Ronaldo and Roberto Baggio when they meet Austrian side Sturm Graz in the European Cup Champions' League on Wednesday.

They have been ruled out of the San Siro game by recurring knee problems. Inter know only too well that they badly need a win to atone for a disappointing start in Serie A and the Champions' League.

Two weeks ago Inter were beaten 2-0 in a one-sided Group C game against European champions Real Madrid and on Sunday they struggled to beat lowly Empoli 2-1 in the league despite having a numerical advantage for more than an hour.

Coming after unconvincing performances in a 1-0 home win over Piacenza and a 2-2 away draw with

Cagliari, Sunday's performance prompted a sharp rebuke from club owner Massimo Moratti.

"We were lucky at Empoli and I thank heaven for having got away with it but we've got to learn to run fewer risks. I'd hate to think that this season's Inter will be the one we saw in the second half at Empoli," said Moratti.

Inter's experienced captain Giuseppe Bergomi accepted his boss's criticism but said: "The president would like to see us win 2-0 or 3-0 every time but that's impossible. All we need now is a win to get out of this negative moment."

In the absence of Baggio and Ronaldo, Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano returns to lead the attack alongside Nicola Ventola, scorer of Inter's winner against Empoli.

Coach Gigi Simoni has plenty of choice in midfield with Argentines Javier Zanetti and Diego Simeone, Dutchman Aron Winter, Frenchmen Benoit Calet and Youri Djorkaeff and Brazilian Ze Elias all in contention for a place.

Inter will be without defenders Francesco Colonnese, Nigerian Tariho West and Salvatore Fresi, all suspended.

Sturm Graz, third in the Austrian league after a 1-0 away win over Steyr on Saturday, also have injury problems.

Polish international goalkeeper Kazimierz Sidorczuk is out because of a calf muscle problem and will be replaced by Nigerian Abiodun Baruwa.

Sturm are also without long-term injured midfielders Tomica Kocijan and Gilbert Prasnaig.



Chicago Cubs slugger Sammy Sosa hits a single in the sixth inning of the National League wild-card playoff game against the San Francisco Giants in Chicago (AP Photo)

Major League Baseball playoff programme

Division Series (Best-of-five)

AMERICAN LEAGUE

• **Cleveland vs Boston**
Tue, Sept 29 at Cleveland
Wed, Sept 30 at Cleveland
Fri, Oct 2 at Boston
Sat, Oct 3 at Boston
Mon, Oct 5 at Cleveland

• **NY Yankees vs Texas**
Tue, Sept 29 at NY Yankees
Wed, Sept 30 at NY Yankees
Fri, Oct 2 at Texas
Sat, Oct 3 at Texas
Sun, Oct 4 at NY Yankees

NATIONAL LEAGUE

• **Atlanta vs Chicago or San Francisco**
Wed, Sept 30 at Atlanta
Thu, Oct 1 at Atlanta
Sat, Oct 3 at Chicago or SF
Sun, Oct 4 at Chicago or SF
Mon, Oct 5 at Atlanta

• **San Diego vs Houston**
Tue, Sept 29 at Houston
Thu, Oct 1 at Houston
Sat, Oct 3 at San Diego
Sun, Oct 4 at San Diego
Mon, Oct 5 at Houston

League Championship Series (Best-Of-Seven)

American League

Tue, Oct. 6
Wed, Oct. 7
Fri, Oct. 9
Sat, Oct. 10
Sun, Oct. 11
Tue, Oct. 13
Wed, Oct. 14

National League

Wed, Oct. 7
Thu, Oct. 8
Sat, Oct. 10
Sun, Oct. 11
Mon, Oct. 12
Wed, Oct. 14
Thu, Oct. 15

World Series (Best-of-Seven)

American League vs National League
Sat, Oct. 17 at American League
Sun, Oct. 18 at American League
Tue, Oct. 20 at National League
Wed, Oct. 21 at National League
Thu, Oct. 22 at American League
Sat, Oct. 24 at American League
Sun, Oct. 25 at American League

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

group: "If you look at it objectively, Dynamo Kiev are the favourites...Dynamo Kiev have the experience of the competition."

Having started last season as underdogs, that may put an extra pressure on the Ukrainians. If they are to maintain their new status, Dynamo cannot afford another disappointment.

No doubt the "twelfth man", as Ukrainians like to call their partisan crowd, will give them a much needed boost, evident in this month's Euro2000 qualifier win for Ukraine, made up mostly of Dynamo players, over Russia at the same ground.

Lens will be no pushover, however, even though they lie just 15th in the French league after two consecutive defeats — 3-1 at Lyon and 4-2 at home to Nantes after having two men sent off.

The French feel they have been lacking a leader since veteran defender Jean-Guy Wallemme left for Coventry.

In his absence France winger Tony Vairelles has been asked to assume this role.

"I'm going to try as much as possible to shake up my team mates on the pitch," he said. "I'll do it as far as I can although I lack the experience."

Vairelles and right back Eric Sikora are nursing bruised thighs but should play. Also back is central defender Cyril Magnier after missing the Arsenal game.

On the other side, the Ukrainians have plenty of worries of their own, mostly in defence.

Right-back Oleg Luzhny and central defender Vladislav Vashchuk are not in top form after missing much of pre-season training while left-back Yuri Dmitriyev is nursing a leg injury sustained in a league game last Thursday.

Nevertheless, all three are expected to start as will captain Yuri Kalitvintsev, who lacks match practice, while fellow influential midfielder Alexander Khatskevich is sitting out his third match of a five-game suspension for head-butting.

On a positive note for Dynamo, veteran coach Valery Lobanovsky, still hoping to add his 1975 and 1986 European Cup Winners' Cup titles, can always rely on his pair of dangerous strikers, Andriy Shevchenko and Serhiy Rebrov.

Both are in top form and scored in Dynamo's last league outing — a 3-3 draw against Tavria in Simferopol — and will be looking to pick up the slack for their teammates.

Olsen under pressure as Porto visit Ajax

AMSTERDAM (R) — Ajax Amsterdam coach Morten Olsen realises the honeymoon is over but must be desperate for a Champions' League win against visitors Porto to bring back some of last season's positive spirit.

Last year, in the league at least, his team seemed incapable of doing anything wrong. Now it is almost the opposite. The personnel has barely changed — veteran Michael Laudrup is the only significant player to have left, although the De Boer twins seemed on the point of going.

However, confidence has crashed and there is speculation that Olsen's days are numbered.

Comfort for Ajax came at the weekend with a 1-0 win over NAC Breda. The victory was unconvincing but it came after a loss and two draws and Ronald de Boer got his first goal this season.

"We won, which means the mental side was good. Moreover, we have filled up with

confidence for Porto," Olsen said.

On the positive side, last year's top scorer Sbotu Arveladze has returned to the squad. However, they may miss the leadership of Danny Blind who is doubtful for Wednesday's match.

Ajax got a satisfactory point from their 0-0 draw at Croatia Zagreb but they need more at home. The neutrals too will want a lot more excitement than during that turgid encounter.

For Porto, Yugoslav international goalkeeper Ivica Kralj is injured and will be the one major absentee from their line-up.

However, he was the man blamed for at least one of the two goals which Olympiakos scored in the dying minutes to force a draw in Porto's opening Champions' League game two weeks ago.

Porto's danger man is likely to be lanky Brazilian striker Mario Jardel.

Souness vs Robson as Benfica host PSV

LISBON (R) — Benfica manager Graeme Souness and PSV Eindhoven's Bobby Robson both have a lot riding on Wednesday's European Cup Champions' League clash between their clubs.

Despite being joint leaders of the Portuguese league, Benfica have yet to turn in a really convincing performance and talk of dressing room disputes between Portuguese and foreign

players has stoked the sense of unease.

Souness, whose team choices are said to be behind the wrangling, ordered a news blackout ahead of the group F game which Benfica need to win to realistically keep alive their hopes of progressing in the competition.

The former European champions lost 1-0 away to Germany's Kaiserslautern in their opening group game two weeks

ago and cannot afford to drop points at home.

In contrast, PSV began their European campaign with a 2-1 home win over HUK Helsinki. Since then things have gone from bad to worse for the Dutch.

Robson, the former England manager, watched his side crash to a humiliating 4-1 defeat to AZ Alkmaar last weekend, PSV's third league defeat

this season.

"This was the worst (defeat). We were trampled in all areas," said Robson. "We have to...rebuild the confidence of the players."

But question marks over the fitness of captain Andre Ooijer and defender Stan Valckx threaten to add to the woes of the former Barcelona coach. Their absence would create more problems for an already leaky defence.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Hisham Yares Theatre
	Lawrence Fishburn & Andy Garcia .. in	John Travolta & Olivia Newton-John .. in	Comedian Adel Imam .. in	CONCORD '1' NASSER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria ARMAGEDDON Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Leonardo Di Caprio & Robert DeNiro .. in MARVIN'S ROOM Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Watch out for the new play
	HOODLUM Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	GREASE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	AL ZA'HEM Shows: 6:30, 9:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30				

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HRH Princess Alia hands one of the trophies on the opening day of the Arabian Horse Show at the Royal Stables. See story on page 2 (photo by Yousef Aljan)

Hingis reign in jeopardy as lead falls to 26 points

MIAMI (AFP) — Swiss World No. 1 Martina Hingis had her margin over second-ranked American Lindsay Davenport plunge 120 points, leaving her only 26 ahead in the WTA Tour rankings released Monday.

While U.S. Open champion Davenport remained at 5,470 points, Hingis tumbled from 5,616 to 5,496 in the newest ratings here.

Three position switches were the only moves among the WTA top 20. Mary Pierce of France rose one place to 11th, moving past Belgian Dominique Van Roost. Russia's Anna Kournikova switched places with Irina Spirela, jumping to 13th while the Romanian fell to 14th. And Germany's Anke Huber rose to 20th while Croatia's Iva Majoli fell to 21st, one ahead of former number one Steffi Graf.

1. Martina Hingis (Swi)	5496 pts
2. Lindsay Davenport (USA)	5470
3. Jana Novotna (Cze)	4819
4. Arantxa Sanchez (Spa)	3473
5. Venus Williams (USA)	3015
6. Monica Seles (USA)	2855
7. Conchita Martinez (Spa)	2404
8. Nathalie Tauziat (Fra)	2301
9. Patty Schnyder (Swi)	2274
10. Amanda Coetzer (Rsa)	1963
11. Mary Pierce (Fra)	1948
12. Dominique Van Roost (Bel)	1926
13. Anna Kournikova (Rus)	1917
14. Irina Spirela (Rom)	1893
15. Ai Sugiyama (Jpn)	1669
16. Lisa Raymond (USA)	1612
17. Natasha Zvereva (Blr)	1569
18. Sandrine Testud (Fra)	1454
19. Serena Williams (USA)	1418
20. Anke Huber (Ger)	1317

Sydney Games organisers hope to cash in on test events

SYDNEY (AFP) — Sydney Olympic organisers said Tuesday they are exploring new ways of raising cash for the 2000 Games after the budget was revised to A\$2.5 billion (\$1.475 billion).

Organisers want to sell companies the right to put their names on warm-up events and Games venues in the pre-Olympic year.

"We've never budgeted for revenue coming in from the test events. We've just had this fabulous test event on Sydney harbour and we never went to the market place seeking any revenue to come in from that," said Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) president Michael Knight.

Test events — there are another 41 left after last week's yachting regatta — are not restricted by rules banning advertising.

"They're not conducted under Olympic sponsorship rules," Knight added.

The cost of staging the Games has increased by A\$128 million (\$76 million) in the past year — A\$1 billion (\$595 million) more than budgeted in 1996.

The New South Wales State government has ordered the organising committee to put aside any savings in the next two years to help pay for the swelling costs.

Knight has promised NSW taxpayers would not be left with any Games debt, saying SOCOG would not spend any money it had not raised.

BBC unhappy with Sydney Olympic infrastructure

SYDNEY (AFP) — The BBC, one of the largest broadcasters covering the Sydney 2000 Olympics, attacked the Games' infrastructure Tuesday, saying there were serious accommodation shortages and poor transport facilities.

A spokesman for the British Broadcasting Corporation said the media village adjacent to the Homebush Bay Olympic site, in Sydney's west, would only act as a "back-stop" for broadcasters.

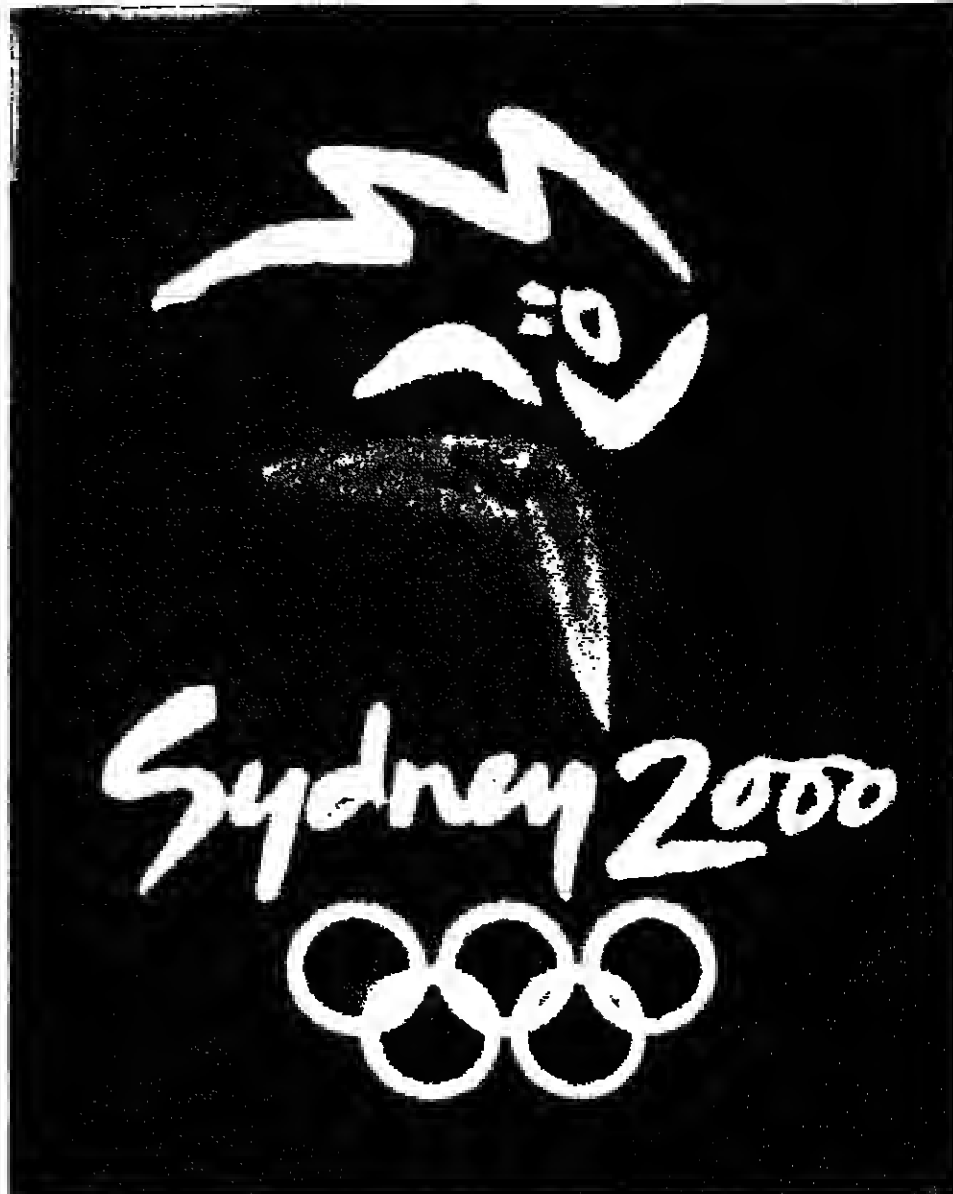
Some of the corporation's 350-strong Olympic reporting team would have to find accommodation elsewhere, said Martin Hopkins.

"Homebush Bay may be one of the best venues and it also includes the broadcast centre, which is marvellous, but there are some serious shortages of hotels nearby and I don't fancy driving from downtown Sydney every morning to try to get to work at Homebush," Hopkins told reporters here.

Homebush is about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the city centre.

He said dedicated traffic lanes would not solve the problem, although he doubted it would be as bad as those at the 1996 Atlanta Games.

"The organisation collapsed in Atlanta, I'm sure that won't happen here but obviously there are severe limitations, one of them being the number of traffic lights between here (Sydney city) and Homebush," he said.



But he praised Sydney's Olympic venues as the best he had seen in his career.

Some of the 180 international broadcasters holding the rights to film and distribute images from the

2000 Olympics are meeting in Sydney to discuss logistics.

An international broadcast centre will be established by the Sydney Olympic Broadcasting Organisation (SOBO)

within walking distance of the Olympic stadium and 15 other Olympic venues.

Olympics Minister Michael Knight said the 2000 broadcast centre would be the biggest in Olympic history.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Sparta Prague may be for sale

BRATISLAVA (R) — Czech soccer club AC Sparta Prague may be up for sale, a spokesman for the club's Slovak owner told the SITA news agency on Tuesday. Sparta was bought by Slovak steel maker VSZ Holding in 1996 for one billion Slovak crowns (\$28.8 million). SITA quoted VSZ spokesman Jozef Marko as saying that talks were being held on the sale but he would not say with whom. No further details were available and Marko was not immediately available to confirm the report. Sparta have long vied for top spot in the Czech soccer league with rivals Slavia Prague and have regularly appeared in European competitions. Two weeks ago Sparta lost 4-2 at home in the UEFA cup to Spain's Real Sociedad.

'Black day' for home players

TOULOUSE (AFP) — All three French players on duty crashed at the first hurdle at the \$375,000 ATP tournament here on Monday. Fifth-seeded Fabrice Santoro went out to big-hitting Marc Rosset of Switzerland 4-6, 6-2, 6-3. Lionel Roux was beaten in straight-sets 6-3, 7-6 (7/5). And 21-year-old Jean-Baptiste Periant lost 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4 to Andrei Medvedev of the Ukraine.

Hrbaty keeps Slovakia in World Group

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Slovakia finally clinched a 3-2 victory in their rain-interrupted Davis Cup qualifying tie against Argentina here Monday by winning both of the reverse singles. Trailing 2-1 after Saturday's doubles and Sunday's rain, Karol Kucera, despite being in constant pain from a shoulder injury, put Slovakia back on level terms by beating Franco Squillari 6-3, 6-3, 3-6, 5-7, 6-4. Dominik Hrbaty then won the final singles by defeating Hernan Gumy 6-2, 3-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Jordan in court

CHICAGO (AFP) — Basketball superstar Michael Jordan played defence in court here Monday as he took the witness stand to answer breach-of-contract charges in a lawsuit filed by producers of a basketball movie.

Jordan gave evasive answers to questions from attorneys for Heaven Corp., a production company which is claiming between \$16 and \$20 million in damages resulting from Jordan's failure to honor a 1987 contract to appear in the movie "Heaven is a Playground."

The movie, filmed in Chicago's Cabrini-Green housing project in 1990 and released in 1991, was a box-office flop.

Jordan told the jury of seven women and five men that his agent handled most of the dealings with the production company.

He conceded that he had signed a tentative deal to star in the movie in exchange for a \$50,000 retainer — which he later repaid — and a five per cent share of the profits.

Sampras tops ATP rankings

LONDON (AFP) — Latest ATP tennis rankings on Monday:

1. Pete Sampras (USA)	4015 points
2. Patrick Rafter (Aus)	3575
3. Marcelo Rios (Chi)	3467
4. Petr Korda (Cze)	2908
5. Carlos Moya (Spa)	2858
6. Karol Kucera (Svk)	2732
7. Alex Corretja (Spa)	2626
8. Andre Agassi (USA)	2545
9. Richard Krajicek (Ned)	2534
10. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus)	2508
11. Tim Henman (Gbr)	2366
12. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	2203
13. Jonas Bjorkman (Swe)	2115
14. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	2091
15. Mark Philippoussis (Aus)	1987
16. Albert Costa (Spa)	1823
17. Alberto Berasategui (Spa)	1793
18. Cedric Pioline (Fra)	1766
19. Thomas Enqvist (Swe)	1681
20. Jan Siemerink (Ned)	1652
21. Felix Mantilla (Spa)	1633
22. Thomas Johansson (Swe)	1508
23. Thomas Muster (Aut)	1455
24. Magnus Gustafsson (Swe)	1376
25. Gustavo Kuerten (Bra)	1312

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SAFE BUT SURE

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ K 6 3
♥ A K Q
♦ 2
♣ A K 8 7 5 4

WEST
♠ A J 9 4
♥ J 10 3 2
♦ A 8 7
♣ 9 8

EAST
♠ 7
♥ 9 8 7 5 4
♦ Q 10 8 6 4
♣ 10 6 2

SOUTH
♠ Q 10 8 5 2
♥ 6
♦ K J 6 5 3
♣ Q J

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass
2♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
3♠ Pass 3♠ Pass

Opening lead: Ace of ♣

The list of master technicians is not all that long. High on anyone's roster is Sammy Kebela of Toronto, formerly of London, born in Baghdad, who made a lasting impression everywhere he played. Here's an example of his technique.

North's reverse was, in the modern style, a one-round force. The sequence chosen highlighted the

singleton diamond but, since that was duplication of values, South had to interest in spades.

West led the ace of diamonds and continued the suit. At one table of a team match, declarer won in hand, led a spade to the king and a spade back, only to find there were three trump losers — down one.

For Kebela, the hand was almost too simple. After winning the second diamond in hand, he crossed to dummy with the queen of hearts, discarded two diamonds on the high hearts and led a trump to the queen and ace. East shifted to a club, taken in the closed hand. A low trump was led and, when West produced the four, the table's six was called for! That limited the trump losers to two and 10 tricks came in easily.

What if East was able to win the second spade? That meant spades were breaking 3-2, so declarer would win any return and draw the last trump with the king, again making 10 tricks.

What was most impressive about the hand was not so much the technique — every good player should make the hand. What made the deepest mark on those watching was the speed with which Kebela played the hand.

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Only qualified applicants should submit an application (available at the Embassy gate) to the Personnel Office prior to October 11, 1998.

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NOTICE (From the Embassy of Sri Lanka)

The chairman, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment will visit Jordan October 1st through the 5th, 1998.

All agents and companies receiving male manpower from Sri Lanka are requested to meet him during this period.

For appointments, please contact
the Sri Lanka Embassy.
Contact person Tel.: 5930905-5930960,
Fax: 5930549

For over 4 years: 'UNSCOM got best tips on Iraqi arms from Israel'

WASHINGTON (R) — For more than four years, United Nations arms inspectors got some of their best information on forbidden Iraqi weapons from the Israeli government, the Washington Post reported on Tuesday.

The newspaper quoted "knowledgeable sources in the United States, Israel and the United Nations" saying that Israel gave the U.N. arms inspectors detailed and sensitive data on Iraq.

Among its most important contributions, the Post reported, were significant leads on the existence of a biological weapons programme and the first concrete evidence that Iraq had a systematic campaign to conceal its weapons programmes.

Former chief U.N. arms inspector, Scott Ritter, told the Israeli English-language newspaper Ha'aretz in an interview published on Monday that he had visited Israel many times from 1994 to 1998 and UNSCOM would not have been able to carry out its work without Israel's help.

Iraq, which repeatedly accused UNSCOM inspectors of bias in their investigations, suspended inspections by U.N. arms experts on Aug. 5, prompting the U.N. Security Council in a Sept. 9 resolution to stop its periodic reviews of the sanctions until Baghdad reversed its stand.

In response Iraq has threat-

ened to break off all cooperation with the inspectors, including closing down arms monitoring systems, until the council rescinds its resolution.

The Security Council imposed the crippling embargo after Baghdad's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The Washington Post said the two-way exchange of information between UNSCOM and Israel included meetings with the director and deputy director of Israeli military intelligence and Israeli analysis of aerial photography taken by U.S. U-2 surveillance planes.

According to three officials with direct knowledge of the relationship, Israel had become by July 1995 the most important single contributor among the dozens of U.N. member states that have supplied information to UNSCOM since its creation in April 1991, according to the Post report.

It said there was no evidence that Israel directed UNSCOM's activity in any way, or that the U.N. panel gave information improperly or for Israel's national benefit.

UNSCOM spokesman Ewen Buchanan told the Post that the U.N. Security Council resolutions demanding Iraq's disarmament call upon all member states to assist the panel "in discharging its mandate," and more than 40 countries have "helped us in the form of experts, information, equipment, finance and in-kind

help like laboratory analysis or helicopters." He declined comment on UNSCOM's dealings with any particular states.

Tim Trevan, a Briton who until 1995 was political adviser to Rolf Ekeus, UNSCOM's executive chairman until last year, made the first chance link between the panel and Israel at an academic conference on disarmament in January 1994.

At the event, he was introduced to Brig. Gen. Yaakov Amidror, then deputy director of Israel's military intelligence, the Post said. Three months later, in April 1994, Amidror flew secretly to New York for a meeting with Ekeus, sources with firsthand knowledge told the paper.

In September 1994, Israel gave UNSCOM its first major contribution — a detailed allegation that the Special Security Organisation, run by Saddam Hussein's younger son Qusay, was organising the deception and concealment operation.

The tip included descriptions of trucks and depots used to move forbidden materials and documents around the country.

Later, Israeli information helped provide what sources described as a key to unlocking Iraq's biological weapons programme: Israel passed along the tip that Oxoid, an England-based company had sold Iraq 40 metric tonnes of a biological growth medium that Baghdad could not account for.



FROM ZOO TO ZOO: Animal keepers carry a jaguar on a stretcher in Hellabrunn Zoo near Munich on Tuesday. The big cat received an anaesthetic, as did several other animals for the transport to the Osijek Zoo in Croatia, which suffered during the war on the Balkans (AFP photo)

Turkish PM says Syria would 'suffer consequences' of support to Kurds

ANKARA (AFP) — Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz on Tuesday warned that Syria would "suffer consequences" for its alleged support for Turkish Kurd separatists if it did not heed Turkey's warnings, the Anatolia news agency said.

Turkey has repeatedly cautioned Syria, accusing it of supporting the PKK, or Kurdistan Workers Party, the main Kurdish separatist group fighting the central power in Ankara.

If Syria "does not correctly heed Turkey's warnings,

it will suffer the consequences," said Yilmaz, who was speaking to Turkish journalists during an official visit to Mexico.

"As long as Syria does not renounce its support for terrorism, our relations can only degenerate," he said.

Such declarations have stepped up ahead of the monthly meeting Wednesday of the National Security Council (MGK), at which Turkey's top military and civilian officials are reportedly to discuss a series of diplomatic and

economic measures against Damascus.

The MGK is also expected to issue a sharp warning to Syria, the Milliyet paper reported Tuesday.

Turkey has accused its southern neighbour of providing logistical support for the PKK and of sheltering its chief, Abdullah Ocalan, in Damascus or in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in Lebanon.

The PKK has been waging a separatist war in Turkey's south-eastern region since 1984. Nearly

31,000 people have died in the conflict near the borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Damascus denies the allegations about harbouring or aiding terrorists, and in turn has accused Turkey of collaborating with Israel in military fields and thus endangering Arab interests in the region.

Syria also accuses Ankara of limiting the amount of water it receives from the Euphrates river, whose source is in Turkey. Ankara rejects the charge.

Disagreement with superiors behind Halliday's resignation

BAGHDAD (R) — The outgoing U.N. coordinator of the Iraqi oil-for-food programme, Denis Halliday, made it clear on Tuesday that clashes with his New York-based superiors were a key reason for his resignation.

Addressing a news conference a day before he gave up his post, he said his reasons for going were also personal.

"There are a number of reasons. One is very personal. I have a lovely 15-year-old daughter and I like to go back to spend some time with her," Halliday said.

"I also had some difficulty in relationship between the headquarters and this mission," the 57-year-old Irish diplomat said, adding: "I see my departure as a positive thing."

Halliday had been outspoken about the weaknesses of the plan and was known to have clashed with Benon Sevan, the New York-based executive director of the programme who was appointed last October.

He criticised the programme but said it had contributed to

improving living standards in Iraq.

"Despite the politics and difficulties of this programme and despite frustration...it is modestly working," he said.

"It is underfunded. It is slow, bureaucratic and costly but nevertheless it does make the difference," he added.

The oil-for-food programme allows Iraq to sell oil to buy necessary humanitarian supplies to offset the impact on ordinary Iraqis of the sanctions imposed eight years ago when Baghdad's troops invaded Kuwait.

In June the programme increased the amount of oil Iraq can sell every six months to \$5.25 billion worth.

Halliday, an assistant secretary general, was the fourth coordinator of the programme since the operation began in December 1996.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan on Monday appointed Hans von Sponeck, an assistant secretary general, to succeed Halliday, the United Nations said in a statement.

"The secretary general wishes to record his high appreciation for the dedication and experience that Mr. Halliday brought to this complex assignment," it added.

Halliday said of Von Sponeck: "I think it is healthy to have somebody else coming in who is new and emerged with new ideas and who undoubtedly will find ways and means to do a better job."

Since the beginning of the programme seven million tonnes of food worth more than \$2.2 billion and \$366 million worth of medicine have been delivered to Iraq.

Iraq said the programme had failed to meet all Iraqis' relief needs and urged an immediate end to trade sanctions.

Halliday also known to be in favour of lifting sanctions against Iraq as soon as possible.

"The fact that we are in the U.N. obliged to sustain these resolutions on the sanctions regime, for me is very unfortunate and uncomfortable situation," he said.

'Undercover Israeli spies married Arab women to blend in society'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli agents assigned to spy on the country's Arab minority in the 1950s went so far as to marry Arab women and raise families to maintain their cover, the Haaretz newspaper said Tuesday.

The newspaper revealed for the first time the existence of a special unit of the Shin Bet secret service which deployed undercover agents in Arab towns and bedouin settlements for seven years in the 1950s.

"We were meant to use these agents in case of violent action on the part of the Arab minority," Amos Manor, who headed the Shin Bet at the time, told Haaretz.

A former commander of the unit, Shmuel Moriah, said a number of the agents eventually married Arab women as part of their effort to blend in with their target communities and some even raised families.

The marriages ultimately were seen as "a serious

mistake which caused major problems both for the agents and the Shin Bet when the unit was disbanded," he said.

A number of marriages broke up and children were abandoned when the agents were forced to reveal their true identities, while others took their families with them and some wives converted to Judaism.

Officials said problems involving these families continued to occupy the Shin Bet personnel depart-

ment for some 30 years.

Arab Israelis are descendants of Palestinians who refused to flee their homes following the creation of the state of Israel and the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948.

Until 1966 the community, which now numbers around one million, lived under a special military regime built around state of emergency laws adopted from the former British mandate over Palestine.

Mubarak: Israel hypocritical in objecting to neighbours' weapons

CAIRO (AP) — Israel should not object to other countries acquiring arms when its own arsenal has nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said in remarks published Tuesday.

"We see that Israel wants now to have nuclear weapons and missiles and does not want others to have anything," Mubarak told Egypt's leading Al-Ahram newspaper.

Israel has never acknowledged owning nuclear, biological or chemical weapons but foreign intelligence and defence agencies say it has all three. Western intelligence reports say Israel is the only nuclear power in the Middle East

and has a significant stockpile.

"Israel wants to own nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, then it objects when we acquire a missile," Mubarak said.

Although Egyptian officials have frequently criticised Israel for its military acquisition, it is unusual for Mubarak himself to speak in such harsh terms about the Jewish state.

Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, but the two neighbours have shared a cold friendship.

Mubarak said the Israelis have been talking about the growing Egyptian military power in an attempt to cover up Arab concerns about the new Israeli missile.

Israel announced Sept. 14 that its Arrow-2 missile successfully destroyed a simulated target in the first comprehensive test of the anti-missile's systems.

Mubarak's interview, to be published in parts on three days beginning Tuesday, is to mark the 25th anniversary of the Oct. 6, 1973 assault when the Egyptian army crossed the Suez Canal into the Israeli-held Sinai peninsula.

Mubarak was the commander of the air force during the assault, which is hailed in Egypt as a great victory and a revenge for the Arab forces' loss in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Israel had captured Sinai in that war and had returned it only under the 1979 peace treaty.

Mubarak also criticised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for not working for peace.

Egypt wants peace to make the region stable "but the method of ... Netanyahu is the method of hitting war every now and then," he said.

"He (Netanyahu) attacked the Oslo agreements, attacked the Camp David agreement ... which opened the door for peace in the region and led to the peace treaty with Egypt." "War will not solve a problem, and if Netanyahu is hinting war, I would like everybody to know that war does not solve a problem at all," he said.

Moderate Iranian magazine banned for 'insulting' Khomeini

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian monthly magazine has been banned for insulting the late founder of the Islamic republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the official IRNA news agency reported Tuesday.

A Tehran court on Monday revoked the publishing licence of the magazine "Jameh Saleem" (Healthy Society) and sentenced the editor-in-chief, Siavosh Gouran, to a one-year jail term and a fine of three

million rials (\$1,000).

However, the jail term was suspended for five years when Gouran explained that the article was published without his knowledge due to his "poor eyesight."

The closure of the magazine came amid a crackdown on publications supportive of Iran's moderate president, Mohammad Khatami. They have been accused of being un-Islamic and pro-Western.

In mid-September, the daily

Toos, which had gained popularity among the young and intellectuals, was shut down by the security forces and its editorial staff arrested.

IRNA reported Monday that the daily was shut down because of an interview with former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in which he claimed Khomeini had sought and been granted political asylum when he went to France before the Islamic Revolution in 1978.

Pledge on Rushdie clears obstacle in Iran ties with EU

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union (EU) has said that Iran's assurances that it would not threaten British writer Salman Rushdie's life cleared an obstacle to better relations between Iran and the 15-nation bloc.

Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Khatrazi gave assurances last week that his government would take no action whatsoever to threaten the life of the author of "The Satanic Verses" or anybody associated with his work.

The assurance, offered more

than nine years after the late revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini condemned Rushdie to death for blaspheming Islam, enabled Britain and Iran to seal an agreement to restore full diplomatic relations.

In a statement issued on Monday night by Austria, the current holder of the bloc's rotating presidency, the EU welcomed Iran's pledge on Rushdie.

"The European Union has long sought satisfactory assurances in that respect and con-

siders them a very positive step by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran," it said.

It added that the move "removes an impediment to better relations between the European Union and Iran and enhances the prospects of closer cooperation to be discussed through the renewed dialogue."

In January, the E.U. lifted a ban on contacts with Iran after a thaw in relations under reformist President Mohammad Khatami.

Religious body proposes censorship of satellite TV

KUWAIT (AP) — An influential Islamic body has proposed that the government set up a television facility that would censor foreign satellite broadcasts and redistribute the programmes by cable.

However, the sanitised broadcasts will not be compulsory and people would be free to receive uncensored versions with personal satellite dish antennas as they are doing now,

the Islamic committee said.

"Every country has the option of protecting its values and morals ... some people want to refine satellite channels before they receive them and this project provides them with that," Adel Al Falah, the vice president of the committee, was quoted as saying by the state-run Kuwait News Agency.

"Satellite dishes will continue to be available and everybody is

free to choose whatever they want," he said.

Kuwait's emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, founded the committee in 1991 to study how Sharia, or Islamic laws, could be gradually and fully implemented in this modernised but tradition-steeped country.

Fundamentalist Muslims have significantly grown in popularity since the 1991 Gulf

war that ended a seven-month Iraqi occupation of this oil-rich Gulf state.

They have tried three times without success to amend the constitution to make Sharia the sole source of legislation. But the emir has rejected an outright amendment, saying Kuwait was already guided by Islam and implementing Islamic laws did not need a change in constitution.



Madonna's interior more appealing than exterior — Hindu scholars

NEW DELHI (AP) — Hindus who criticised Madonna for her revealing clothing were not looking deeply enough, some Hindu scholars say. "Hinduism is a religion of tolerance," Acharya Vagesh Shastri, one of the most respected scholars in the Hindu holy city of Varanasi, said Sunday. "One should have the vision to look beyond her transparent tops. Her interior is more appealing than her exterior." The World Vaishnava Association had issued a statement condemning Madonna for wearing a holy facial marking along with "clothes through which her nipples were clearly visible and while gyrating in a sexually suggestive manner" during the Sept. 10 MTV Video Music Awards.

Stone denies pregnancy

NEW YORK (AP) — Sharon Stone is only playing a mom in a new movie. The actress is denying published reports she's pregnant. Citing friends of the actress, the New York Post reported Monday that Stone, married less than a year, is in her first trimester. Stone begged to differ. "Not only am I not pregnant, but it is the exterior of my body that is my public image and therefore available to the press," she said Monday. "This place in my heart and my body is my own. I suggest the press back up to a dignified and respectful place."

Hilfiger White House ad not a political statement

NEW YORK (AP) — A Tommy Hilfiger ad campaign that included a picture of a model sitting on a desk in a fake Oval Office will be changed to remove any future reference to the White House. In a letter to the designer, the White House legal office asked that the ads be changed because of a longstanding policy that the White House not be used for advertising purposes. The request was not prompted by the controversy surrounding President Bill Clinton's relationship with Monica Lewinsky. White House spokeswoman Amy Weiss said Monday. The ads, previewing the designer's fashion fall line, began appearing in the September issues of some magazines.

New look for Britain's traditional red phone boxes

LONDON (AFP) — Britain has broken with tradition and introduced a new batch of its famous bright red phone boxes in black in the centre of London. Around 50 of the K6 model phone booths, created in 1936, will be installed in their new black livery around Piccadilly Circus and Charing Cross, the heart of tourist London. The old-style phone boxes have gradually been replaced by British Telecom since the 1980s but have been kept in the historic centre of the capital. Other phone companies are allowed to put up the traditional model boxes as long as they are painted red.